

1998

Proceedings of the Center of Catholic Studies Knowledge and Wisdom

Center for Catholic Studies, Seton Hall University

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Summer 1998

Proceedings of the Center of Catholic Studies Knowledge and Wisdom

Center of Catholic Studies

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For in her is a spirit
Intelligent, holy, unique,
Manifold, subtle, agile,
clear, unstained, certain,
Not baneful, loving the good,
keen, unhampered,
beneficent, kindly,
Firm, secure, tranquil,
all-powerful, all seeing,
And pervading all spirits,
though they be intelligent,
pure and very subtle.
For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion,
and she penetrates and
pervades all things
by reason of her purity.

Book of Wisdom 7: 22 - 24

*These proceedings are dedicated
in memory of*

Matthew Petersheim

Professor of Chemistry, Seton Hall University

A friend and colleague.

*Have you ever really had a teacher?
One who saw you as a raw but precious thing,
a jewel that, with wisdom, could be polished to a proud shine?**

Matt was that teacher.

*From *Tuesdays with Morrie*, Mitch Albom, Doubleday: New York, 1997.

*Proceedings of the
Center for Catholic Studies*

KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM

Summer Seminar 1998

*Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey*

ANNOUNCEMENT OF SUMMER SEMINAR 1998

John C. Haughey, S.J.

Professor of Christian Ethics, University of Loyola Chicago

Being a faculty member at a Catholic university, it behooves one to know something about the Catholic intellectual tradition in order to align one's understanding with that heritage or to be enriched by it. In my roles as teacher, researcher and colleague, I develop purposes and objectives. This week will be a chance to take measure of these personal appropriations in relationship with the purposes and objectives of Seton Hall and the ministry of higher education as this has been understood by Roman Catholicism.

One of these purposes, presumably, is the attainment of *sapientia*, holy wisdom. An all encompassing purpose of a faculty member is growth in *scientia*, in knowledge of his or her discipline. How do wisdom and knowledge connect? Who connects them? When is it a consequence of study or research? Is it a gift before it is a consequence? Should it be an explicit purpose of one's research? How is wisdom achieved by one whose responsibility is competence in an intellectual discipline? What can Catholicism contribute to growth in wisdom?

Another issue that should make it to the table is the matter of education and justice, educating for justice. In this regard, we should ponder the claim of Ignacio Ellacuria S. J., the murdered Rector of the University of Central America in San Salvador: "The struggle against injustice and the pursuit of truth cannot be separated nor can one work for one independently of the other."

PREFACE

Monsignor Robert Sheeran
President, Seton Hall University

I am very happy to commend to you this series of articles by our faculty on the topic of "*Knowledge and Wisdom*." These articles are the fruit of a workshop held at the end of May 1998, and facilitated by John C. Haughey, S.J., Professor of Christian Ethics at the University of Loyola in Chicago. This workshop, the first of its kind here at Seton Hall, and this volume of articles are sponsored by our new Center for Catholic Studies.

Perhaps no topic could be a more fitting focus for this first series of reflections than that of knowledge and wisdom. In a period of information explosion and, at times, saturation, there is no awareness more important than the distinction between information, knowledge and wisdom. Father Haughey highlighted that distinction in the workshop and facilitated the participants' reflections, many of which are presented in this volume. I hope Seton Hall and its faculty can continue to clarify this distinction and make it a living awareness in our society.

In coming years the Center for Catholic Studies will continue to sponsor similar workshops highlighting the relations between the various disciplines in the university curriculum and wider humanistic and religious concerns. These discussions should bring the various disciplines into dialogue with each other as well as with the deeper human aspirations for wholeness, integration and genuine community. This was the original goal of universities in general. And, this was the original goal of the Catholic university.

Nor should these discussions be limited only to Catholics. Wisdom comes from many sources, including the great wisdom traditions and religions of the human family. If the Center for Catholic Studies can help make Seton Hall truly "a home for the faiths," it will have contributed something very special to this university - and to the world.

Finally, I would encourage all our faculty to take part in the future faculty seminars sponsored by the Center for Catholic Studies and extend special thanks to Monsignor Richard Liddy for his vision and leadership in charting the course of this new Center's voyage.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preface	i
Monsignor Robert Sheeran, <i>President, Seton Hall University</i>	
Introduction	1
John R. Sowa, Jr., <i>Editor, Assistant Professor of Chemistry</i>	
Bibliography of Readings for Summer Seminar 1998	4
Wisdom As the Goal of Information	5
John C. Haughey, S.J., <i>Facilitator, Professor of Christian Ethics, University of Loyola Chicago</i>	

CONTEMPLATION AND RESEARCH

Themes of Wisdom in Dialogue	10
Gisela Webb, <i>Associate Professor of Religious Studies</i>	
The Gardener and the Mathematician: A Tale of Two Wisdom Figures	15
John T. Saccoman, <i>Assistant Professor of Mathematics and Computer Science</i>	
Re-Thinking Embodiment in the Light of the Incarnation	19
Judith Chelius Stark, <i>Associate Professor of Philosophy</i>	
Knowledge and Wisdom: "Where is the Politikon Zoon?"	22
W. King Mott, Jr., <i>Visiting Professor of Political Science</i>	
Science, Religion, and the Corrigibility of Quantum Mechanics	26
Joseph T. Maloy, <i>Associate Professor of Chemistry</i>	
Natural Law as a Wisdom Tradition	31
Michael P. Ambrosio, <i>Professor of Law</i>	

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Where Could Academic Freedom Be Healthiest? The Case for Catholic Colleges	38
David R. Foster, <i>Associate Professor of Philosophical Theology</i>	
Social Justice, Catholic Schools, and Teacher Education	41
Richard Ognibene, <i>Professor of Educational Studies</i>	
The Wisdom of the Morally-Centered University	46
Mary F. Ruzicka, <i>Professor of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy</i>	
Seton Hall University and Catholic Social Teaching: A Consummation to be Wished	50
William J. Toth, <i>Associate Professor of Christian Ethics</i>	

THE QUESTION OF WISDOM

"Wisdom" and the Transformation of the Disciplines	54
Richard M. Liddy, <i>Director, Center for Catholic Studies, University Professor of Catholic Thought and Culture</i>	
"The Saints and Poets, Maybe - They Do Some."	
Some Thoughts on the Place of Theater in a Catholic University	60
James P. McGlone, <i>Professor of Communication</i>	
Searching for Wisdom in the Modern Business Curriculum	64
Frederick J. Kelly, <i>Professor of Finance</i>	
Seeking Majesty in the Dust of the Moon	66
Arline Lowe, <i>Assistant Professor of Art and Music</i>	
Wisdom and the Teaching Profession	71
Albert B. Hakim, <i>Director, Center for College Teaching, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy</i>	
Can We Talk?	74
John Ranieri, <i>Assistant Professor of Philosophy</i>	
Biographies	79

COVER:

Knowledge and Wisdom by Arline Lowe

Unless otherwise indicated all participants are from Seton Hall University.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the *Proceedings* of the 1998 Summer Seminar of the Center for Catholic Studies. Seton Hall University has a great tradition in scholarship and religion, thus, the purpose of the Center is to strengthen our voice as a community of scholars working in the tradition of the Catholic faith. The Center for Catholic Studies envisions that this can be done through faculty development seminars that bring faculty together from all wings of the University to discuss the challenges of religion and humanity. Our first faculty seminar entitled *The Idea of a Center for Catholic Studies* was held in the summer of 1997. Although this was only a day-long seminar, it resulted in the eventual founding of the Center for Catholic Studies as an entity of the University.

Our second seminar was held in the summer of 1998 from Tuesday to Friday, May 19 to 22. Seventeen faculty from all areas of the University came together to discuss *Knowledge and Wisdom*. The seminar was facilitated by John C. Haughey, S.J. who is Professor of Christian Ethics at the University of Loyola Chicago. The seminar was a homecoming for Professor Haughey as he served the post of Distinguished Professor at Seton Hall from 1984 to 1985. Because of his intelligent and compassionate leadership, and because the topic of *Knowledge and Wisdom* was so central to our missions as faculty, a great chemistry developed among the participants in the seminar. As part of the seminar we wanted to produce a scholarly product to codify our individual experiences and to share what we have learned with others.

As you pick up these *Proceedings* you are likely to ask "what am I going to read" and "what am I going to learn." It is also likely that you have many deeper and more personal questions in mind such as "what does knowledge and wisdom have to do with me?" Perhaps the most important thing these *Proceedings* can do is to open the eyes of your mind to wisdom and to help you see that the pursuit of knowledge towards the goal of obtaining wisdom is a worthy and rewarding cause.

The cover art by Arline Lowe, Assistant Professor of Art and Music at Seton Hall, beautifully illustrates what is wisdom. It shows a large triangle representing the whole or unity, which houses all aspects of scholarship in smaller inner triangles. The inner triangles show the integration of information (represented by the binary code of computer language in the central triangle) with knowledge, wisdom and truth. Finally, the cross at the

center of all of the triangles indicates the connection of wisdom to Christ and thus to God. Nevertheless, the pursuit of wisdom is done in many ways, for example, think how many different disciplines are at this University and how each faculty member is pursuing excellence in his or her discipline. A particularly-moving perspective on wisdom is found in the bible in the Book of Wisdom 7: 22 - 24.

*For in her is a spirit
intelligent, holy, unique,
Manifold, subtle, agile,
clear, unstained, certain,
Not baneful, loving the good,
keen, unhampered,
beneficent, kindly,
Firm, secure, tranquil,
all-powerful, all seeing,
And pervading all spirits,
though they be intelligent,
pure and very subtle.
For Wisdom is mobile beyond all motion,
and she penetrates and
pervades all things
by reason of her purity.*

In these *Proceedings*, you will also find many beautiful and intelligent perspectives on wisdom. To help orient you, the reader, I have attempted to organize the articles by similar themes. In addition, I have attempted to abstract the salient features of each article to help you develop a perspective of the entire proceedings.

Initially you will find the plenary paper of the *Proceedings* by Professor Haughey entitled *Wisdom as the Goal of Information*. In this age of information, Haughey posits that faculty do not have an adequate appreciation of the goal of all this information that we are gathering. His article redirects and focuses our information gathering toward the pursuit of wisdom. He helps us understand the intellectual foundations of wisdom, and to see its rewards and place in today's society. The papers that follow are roughly organized according to the topics that were presented in the seminar: **Contemplation and Research, Catholic Social Teaching and The Question of Wisdom.**

Contemplation and Research is about how wisdom reveals itself through the contemplative processes that are necessary for the pursuit of intellectual thought such as research. The papers in this section discuss the ways in which wisdom reveals itself through the pursuit of intellectual thought. For example, Gisela Webb, in *Themes of Wisdom in Dialogue*, envisions that wisdom can be achieved through contemplation of other cultures. She explains how this may be done through the study of the Islamic religion. She states: "looking at the 'wisdom' of other traditions can shed light on spiritual resources within one's own tradition that one may not have been aware of."

Wisdom can also be seen in our contemplation of people whom we recognize as wise. Thus, in a wonderfully personal account, John T. Saccoman discusses two wise people, his grandfather and his mentor in the field of mathematics. In his article entitled *The Gardener and the Mathematician: A Tale of Two Wisdom Figures*, it is interesting to see how two persons with dissimilar levels of education can both be considered wise.

The search for wisdom can also be found in ourselves. However, not just in our minds and our spirit, as you would think, but in "the full human person – body, mind, spirit, emotions, appetites and aspirations." This novel and fascinating theme is presented by Judith Chelius Stark in *Re-thinking Embodiment in the Light of the Incarnation*. In the next article in this section, *Knowledge and Wisdom: "Where is the Politikon Zoon?"*, W. King Mott proposes ritual as a way in which wisdom is revealed.

Since the fundamental basis of science is grounded in research, Joseph T. Maloy's article on *Science, Religion and the Corrigibility of Quantum Mechanics* is included in this section. In a non-technical manner, Maloy peers into the history of the development of modern chemical science and makes intriguing correlations with changes in the world's population and developments in the arts and humanities. In addition, he explains one of the most fundamental processes in scientific thought, corrigibility, which allows for the modification of prevailing theories on the basis of additional experimental evidence. In a sense, science is wisdom in action because it seeks to understand through experimentation and it allows its theories to be continuously modified.

Michael P. Ambrosio, Professor of Law at Seton Hall, presents another manifestation of wisdom in *Natural Law as a Wisdom Tradition*. Professor Ambrosio defines "natural law as the quest for an eternal and immutable justice" and describes the development of natural law throughout human history and through his own professional

career. He states that "it is especially important for those of us who are part of Catholic higher education to understand this intellectual heritage...as a source of wisdom."

The second section, **Catholic Social Teaching**, examines the importance of the Catholic tradition in education and the opportunity for this tradition to be a moral and ethical voice in today's society. Articles that are grouped in this category focus on education at Catholic schools including pre-college and college education.

In *Where Could Academic Freedom Be Healthiest? The Case for Catholic Colleges*, David R. Foster makes a compelling argument that academic freedom is the healthiest at Catholic institutions because of "their strong moral backbone which allows such freedom to be participated in a responsible manner." Next, Richard Ognibene, in *Social Justice, Catholic Schools and Teacher Education*, gives a perspective on his lifelong study and involvement in Catholic education. His observations indicate that the success of students in Catholic schools is partly due to the "shared commitment to an inspirational ideology oriented toward the achievement of social justice in our multicultural society." He suggests introducing service learning into the curriculum of elementary and secondary education programs as a means of deepening this commitment to social justice.

In the next paper of this section, Mary F. Ruzicka presents in *The Wisdom of the Morally-Centered University* a discussion of the power, economic and social impact that today's universities have. "With such power comes moral responsibility." She also makes the specific proposal for the foundation of a Center for Ethics in Higher Education, which would provide a "framework for the vision, goals and standards for the ethical analysis of a Catholic institution of higher education."

It is appropriate that *Seton Hall University and Catholic Social Teaching: A Consummation Devoutly to be Wished* by William J. Toth is the concluding article in this section. This article discusses how Seton Hall can play an important moral and ethical role in today's society by educating the leaders of the future under the ideals of Catholic social teaching.

The third section is a series of articles grouped under the topic **The Question of Wisdom**. The lead article in this section by Monsignor Richard M. Liddy is entitled "*Wisdom and the Transformation of the Disciplines*." This article illustrates that the unique realms of knowledge housed in our disciplines can be united through wisdom because wisdom is a "view of the whole." Clarity about that "view of the whole" can transform our practice of the disciplines. The articles in this section are by faculty who discuss the

problems and rewards of pursuing wisdom through the practice and teaching of their discipline.

The theater is one of the most dramatic places where wisdom reveals itself. Thus, it is appropriate that the director of theater at Seton Hall, James P. McGlone, presents his perspective entitled, "*The Saints and Poets, Maybe - They Do Some.*" *Some Thoughts on the Place of Theater in a Catholic University.* In *Searching for Wisdom in the Modern Business Curriculum*, Frederick J. Kelly examines the purpose and the evolution of the idea of wisdom in business education. He concludes that "if we can challenge [our students] to seek wisdom in their studies, then, not only society, but they will be better off." Next Arline Lowe illustrates how wisdom can be revealed through art in *Seeking Majesty in the Dust of the Moon*. Albert Hakim's article entitled *Wisdom and the Teaching Profession* nicely rounds out this section because he correlates the meaning of wisdom with our role as teachers of our disciplines and of the "view of the whole."

One might wonder, how it was possible to bring together for a week 17 faculty from an array of disciplines to engage each other in such rational discussion. In other words, how did we get these people to talk? An interesting discussion of the elements necessary to engage people in rational discussion is presented by John Ranieri in the article *Can We Talk?* In this article Professor Ranieri introduces us to the philosophy of Eric Voegelin and to the idea that an openness to wisdom is

one element necessary for rational discussion among peoples. Perhaps this is why this faculty seminar went so well - we were all trying to be open to wisdom! I hope that reading these articles will also open you to wisdom.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank each of the 1998 summer seminar participants for their invaluable contribution to these *Proceedings*. A heartfelt appreciation is especially extended to John Haughey for his wonderful leadership and wisdom as the facilitator of the summer seminar. I would also like to thank Monsignor Biddy for his assistance, encouragement, and trust in me as editor of these *Proceedings*. I am grateful for the expert editorial guidance of Laurie Pine from Seton Hall's Department of Public Relations and Marketing and graphic artist Linda Malanga. A special thanks goes to Don Briel, Director of the Center for Catholic Studies at the University of St. Thomas, for sharing with me the ins and outs of UST's summer seminar program. Finally, on behalf of the Center for Catholic Studies, I thank Monsignor Robert Sheeran and the donors to the Center for Catholic Studies for making possible the seminar and publication of these *Proceedings*.

John R. Sowa, Jr.,
Editor

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF READINGS FOR SUMMER SEMINAR 1998

Tuesday, May 19, 1998

Topic: *Contemplation and Research: A discussion on the relationship between being contemplative and intellectual thought.*

The Intellectual Life, It's Spirit, Conditions, Methods, A. D. Sertillanges, O.P.,
The Newman Press, Westminster, MA, 1948, Chapters I, II, VI.

"The Gifts and the Fruits of the Spirit" in *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*, Vol II. Yves M. J. Congar,
Seabury Press, NY: Vol. II, p. 134 - 141.

Wednesday, May 20, 1998

Topic: *Catholic Social Teaching*

"Is Tolerance Enough? The Catholic University and the Common Good," D. Hollenbach, S.J.,
Conversations, Spring 1993, 13, pp. 5 - 18.

"Introduction section," *Conversations*, Spring 1993, 13, p. 3.

Thursday, May 21, 1998

Topic: *The Question of Wisdom*

"Going to the Heart; An Interview with David L. Schindler,"
The Turnaround, March 1998, pp. 16 - 21.

"Introduction section," *Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education*, David. J. O'Brien,
Winter 1996, 16(2), pp. 1 - 4.

"Catholic Higher Education: A Strategy for It's Identity," John. C. Haughey, S.J.,
Current Issues in Catholic Higher Education, Winter 1996, 16(2), pp. 25 - 32.

"Religious Experience" in *A Third Collection*, Bernard Lonergan,
Paulist Press: New York, 1985, p. 115 - 128.

Friday, May 22, 1998

Topic: *Discussion of Papers to be Written.*

WISDOM AS THE GOAL OF INFORMATION

by John C. Haughey, S.J.

When Monsignor Liddy, a long time friend, called me in early January and asked if I would come to facilitate a week of reflection with Seton Hall faculty in May, I was delighted. My memories of the post I had there as "distinguished professor" in 1984-85 are still fond ones. Being a latitudinarian Dick's invitation was broad, something like "introduce them to matter that would have them take the Catholic intellectual tradition more seriously."

At the time of his call I was thinking about the relationship between our research as faculty and its purpose. I had arrived at the conclusion that *sapientia* (wisdom) was its goal and that we faculty at Catholic institutions of higher learning had not sufficiently appreciated this. So I asked him if the passage from *scientia* (knowledge) to *sapientia* would be a good focus for our time together. He immediately liked it. In what follows there is the gist of what I presented at our May sessions.

I. Why Information?

The information age is in full bore. Faculty members are both enriched by this development and at the same time daunted by it since many of their students are more adroit at amassing information than they are. This information explosion occasions a number of questions to be reflected upon. What is the information for? Knowledge, you fool! Knowledge is more organized and stable and therefore considerably more useful than information because it has been sifted, at least to some degree. Knowledge is information that has been put in some kind of order and analyzed.

But, what is knowledge for? As implied already, accuracy is a big part of it. We need our knowledge to be true or probable or close to true or trustworthy. Unverifiable knowledge is still at the stage of information and of little or no use. If information is for knowledge and knowledge is for truth, what is truth for? Much truth is for usefulness; it's usable and therefore valuable. But not all truth is immediately useful or for usefulness. Some of it is for seeing more deeply, living more fully or living rightly or living well. Some truth, therefore, is for wisdom. Truth has its finality in wisdom. Wisdom is not so directly linked to action; it is sought more for its own sake than to attain some good by taking any particular action on the basis of it.

II. Wisdom and its Characteristics

Wisdom has many histories. There are traditions that can be accessed that qualify as "wisdom traditions" because they have a dimensionality that is life wide, life deep, life addressing rather than uni-dimensional. They go beyond an orientation to a particular set of actions in a particular discipline or knowledge tradition. The oldest wisdom traditions are religious and give one access to a transcendent horizon. "Holy wisdom" is the final step in the teleology articulated here whose trajectory begins with information and ends in a religious tradition or a tradition of holy wisdom.

Wisdom is an alluring term. It is not a concept and therefore doesn't have a fixed content to it. It is a power word or symbol and as such has several characteristics that need to be elaborated to give it sufficient content to discourse from. It has its birth in peoples' meta-narratives or master stories. It is story born, in other words. To retrieve it one must return to or have recourse to its narrational home. In ancient times wisdom always had a divine aura. It was either embodied in a god or it was articulated by those whose familiarity with it came from the gods. Spelled out in maxims or proverbs ascribed to wisdom figures, an ordinary member of a people could have access to the tradition of holy wisdom through these.

Secondly, holy wisdom enchanted and by means of this formed those who accessed or, better, inhabited the story which carried it. Furthermore, it summons its adherents to so much more than information or knowledge does. It summoned them to become their better selves, to move beyond themselves. Thirdly, it is normative for a people. It is a multifaceted set of guidelines that wayfarers can set their course by. As such it constrains and delimits its adherents. "Anything goes" will simply be no longer true, given the wisdom tradition and its compass. Wisdom is both an evocative and a constraining power.

And finally, wisdom is fallible. Its carriers are those who have accepted their tradition as true and holding the promise of leading to wisdom and holiness. But these carriers are impacted by much more than their tradition. There is the omnipresent culture and its forms of dilution and compromise that obscure the wisdom tradition. In a given generation a wisdom tradition can easily fall into desuetude or into syncretistic distortions or be riven

by counterfeit versions. The lure of the present culture is towards having the citizenry become "multi-phrenics." Multiphrenia insures folly not wisdom.

III. *Wisdom has a History*

All of this takes some fleshing out. The master narratives within which people found the wisdom they sought to live wisely have been found in the earliest layers of human history. These meta-narratives were faiths and holy wisdom was a constitutive part of their appeal. There were always wisdom figures, usually gods or humans like Greece's Sophocles and Homer. With Plato wisdom was connected to self knowledge and to an ongoing realization of one's ignorance or absence of wisdom. A person could live a life loving wisdom and aspiring to at least pursue it because of his love of it. Loving wisdom is what made a philosopher a philosopher, Plato contended. One of his insights has become a part of every subsequent understanding of wisdom, namely that it belongs to the wise to order things, to put chaos or what is unorganized into an order.

Aristotle seemed even more interested in the subject of wisdom than Plato or maybe was so taken by it because of Plato. Aristotle's main contribution was to connect wisdom to contemplation done for its own sake. He distinguished, therefore, the practical use of one's intellect (*phronesis*) from the speculative and located both happiness and wisdom in this latter activity. This kind of contemplative study, according to Aristotle, was not tethered to need or to something to be used or to gain anything beyond the act of contemplation which was its own reason for being done. Aristotle had the gods in mind in developing this paradigm for coming to wisdom. This use of the intellect for contemplation was what was most divine in us, and using it the closest we come to the gods and their way of being happy. "Happiness extends just so far as contemplative study does and those who contemplate more also have more happiness by virtue of their contemplation."

We jump centuries and cultures when we enter into the Old Testament world of wisdom as developed in the Psalms, Proverbs, Sirach, Job, Ecclesiastes, the Song of Songs, the Book of Wisdom. In some ways this sapiential literature parallels the rest of the world's wisdom collections since it too has maxims that sum up reflection on experience. These tidbits are usually practical in their purviews and not evidently derivative from Torah nor historically based. But wisdom also begins to get metaphorical; there are even efforts to personify wisdom or hypostatize it as it connects more closely to revelation and to being a gift. Wisdom, for example, is an "effusion of

the glory of the Almighty ... the refulgence of eternal light ... the image of God's goodness" (Wisdom 7, 25-26).

In the New Testament wisdom is associated with Christ in several different ways. The most venturesome of these: "... he was made wisdom for us" (1 Cor 1, 30). Christ is a wisdom figure in the Synoptics and Truth in John. He is seen by Paul as embodied wisdom, i.e. "In him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge" (Col 2,3). If this is true, what would this mean concretely as far as our academic work is concerned? If it is not, what kind of statements are these? What did they mean to First Century Christians that they do not mean now? The New Testament radically reconfigures or transfigures wisdom.

To jump to Augustine's articulation of this transfiguration we see him combining Plato's love of wisdom with the love Christ manifested on the Cross. The folly of the world's wisdom is seen in their leaders having crucified the Lord of Glory (1 Cor 2, 8). God's wisdom, furthermore, a "mysterious, hidden wisdom" (1 Cor 2, 7), is attained by the gift of the Spirit. In addition, for Augustine, the contemplata must be loved to be known adequately. Augustine influenced the way theology would be done for centuries by his insistence on it going about its task, the task of seeking wisdom, affectively. Love of what was contemplated was essential to contemplating wisely. Contemplation became much more a matter of savoring with one's whole heart than of merely thinking with one's intellect under Augustine's tutelage.

Aquinas saw further into wisdom because he stood on Augustine's shoulders with one leg, and stood on Aristotle's with his second leg. By this I mean he brought wisdom back into having more of an intellectual character than Augustine had understood. He saw wisdom as having three powers by which it could be approached: reason could bring one a metaphysical wisdom; faith could bring one a theological wisdom; and the impulses in the human spirit moved by the gift of the Spirit could bring one a wisdom that was superior to the other two. For Aristotle, the speculative contemplation that attained to any degree of wisdom was an inquiry into first causes or a tracing of things to their origins or causes. For Aquinas the first principles of wisdom were the articles of faith or sacred doctrine which was revealed. Unlike Aristotle, this wisdom had a practical side to it as well as a speculative one since it could also regulate lives or concretely give guidance to the one contemplating. A holy wisdom sees into the Holy and responds accordingly. It can respond simply by simple repose or regard or it can respond by acting on the wisdom savored.

IV. More on Wisdom

Wisdom as we have seen can be attained by an ordering where there isn't order. It can be arrived at by savoring so that there is a going beyond knowledge. Wisdom, furthermore, can bring the seeker to a point of repose.

Another way of looking at wisdom is that it is the mean that is arrived at between the empirical and the transcendent orders of reality. From the former we can acquire factual information, knowledge and experience. From about the latter we also have information, knowledge and experience. Wisdom is the effort to keep the two together and in balance and to come to an understanding of reality and gain insight into living one's life wisely. Wisdom is the result of having culled what can be known so as to live beyond illusion and appearance and immediacy. The alignment between the two orders is necessary because it enables one to ask and wisely answer questions about life, my own or others, etc. The ordering of truths makes for a more secure base from which to make choices or proceed in life. This is what commends wisdom over simply knowing, even accurate knowing, or truth.

A more specific and focused question remains: how does one go from discrete understandings or bodies of knowledge to the deeper ordering of truths so that wisdom ensues? How does one go from a momentary satisfaction with a part to a sense of the whole and a sense of repose because of having seen the part in light of the whole?

There would seem to be two answers, a collective one and a personal one. About the collective it is obvious no one comes to accurate knowledge much less wisdom alone. Knowledge and wisdom take aeons to build, to develop, to accumulate. We inherit and quaff from disciplines, from knowledge traditions, from wisdom traditions understandings we could never have attained alone. To put this in the ecclesial context, the promised Spirit of truth has been guiding us, the Church, for centuries into "all truth" (Jn 16, 15). The Church's tradition, then, would be the repository of the things learned by the guidance of the Spirit over the centuries.

The more personal attainment of wisdom is the more difficult matter to pin down. Let's assume that the promised Spirit is also received by the individual. How does this gift work in the matter of coming to truth and wisdom? I do not see this guidance by the Spirit to be adventitious nor interventionist. Rather, it seems to me the guidance the Spirit gives comes about from the exercise of the infused gifts of the Spirit and the infused vir-

tues of faith, hope and love. These are *inter alia* sources of knowing. The person who actively exercises and experiences these will come to truth and wisdom which are the fruit of the activation of these principles. He or she would presumably be dissatisfied unless there is some connection made with the particular work he or she does in his or her professional projects and the work of God in Christ which the Spirit discloses or reveals.

The truth the Spirit guides one to in this context is the truth of the connection between his or her necessarily "secular" task of researching and the *ordo salutis*. This is an integrative function that the Spirit plays in making or assisting with the linkage. The truth the Spirit supplies differs from the hard work of trying to find the immediate order or the discrete particular truth that has been attained in one's research. It is a truth about the whole or about the relationship of the part to the whole. The whole can be seen before or after the part has been unearthed as Newman commented or observed in his *Grammar of Assent*.

What I am saying here is that a given discipline can be a source of knowledge, even true knowledge, but it cannot be a source of wisdom. One can relate to or function in or use a discipline wisely or short of wisely. To use a discipline short of wisely is to stop with it, end with it, be satisfied with its limited scope. But since there is a dynamism in the intellect that tends towards ultimacy its trans-disciplinary *elan* must be heeded.

The first three letters of the word university are a challenge that is not taken up by discipline-focused faculty. "Towards oneness." This oneness is not satisfied by the interdisciplinary, though that is a step in the right direction. To relate to or function in or use a discipline wisely one must go beyond the interdisciplinary towards wholeness. Interestingly, the term "catholic" is a combination of the Greek preposition *kata* and the noun *kolos*. One functions wisely within a discipline only if one is not content to stay within its quasi-sovereignty and sublates it by moving it and oneself toward wholeness. A wise faculty member will require of oneself that one's discipline be catholic, little "c." This is not to call into question the legitimate autonomy of the discipline with valid findings, history, methodologies, heroes. It only relativizes that autonomy.

Perhaps the role of the Spirit in this movement in the direction of *uni-* or *catholic* might be seen more clearly if articulated in terms of the verb "to true" than in terms of the noun, truth. The Spirit trues. The metaphor here comes from the construction industry where one trues a wall, or by balancing a table or cutting lumber to the ex-

act size the carpenter trues the wood. There is an immense edifice of truth and truths being built that predates, antecedes the intellectual and will follow him or her. There is a design, therefore, which only the Spirit who is the chief Architect knows fully. The Spirit assists the individual worker with his or her piece of the work (it is only a piece mind you) both in the particular tasks and then shows him or her how it is aligned with, connected to or of a piece with the larger building of Truth and Life that the Spirit is about. In this the Spirit is truing the

person's work with the building of the temple of Truth that glorifies God and serves the Peoples of the earth.

In the sapiential literature, the opposite of wisdom is folly. Folly in this context would be to leave the work one is about in academe unintegrated with the larger whole of which it is only a part. To say the Spirit trues is tantamount to saying that it is wisdom to attempt to conjoin the unconnected. To disregard the work of connection is to remain pre-catholic in one's task as a faculty member.

From T. S. Eliot's
The Rock

*All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death,
But nearness to death no nearer to God.
Where is the life we have lost in living?
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowledge?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information?
The cycles of Heaven in twenty centuries
Bring us farther from God and nearer to the Dust.*

Contemplation and Research

THEMES OF WISDOM IN DIALOGUE

by Gisela Webb

In light of our faculty seminar's discussion of both the notion of wisdom in the Christian (and Western philosophical tradition) and the Church's commitment to inter-religious dialogue,^[1] I wanted to share something of the shape that my studies and teaching in inter-religious studies has taken, especially the way in which the theme of "wisdom" has proven to be particularly useful in Islamic-Christian studies. As my colleagues in the field of Islamic Studies would attest, the special challenge in teaching Islam in the humanities/religious studies context is that one's entire time could be spent trying to give a historical and political context for contemporary expressions of Islamic militancy, whose ugly expressions are a perversion of what Islam means in the lives of most of its members.^[2] There is little in popular memory of the positive moments of interaction and inter-penetration of intellectual and spiritual insight that have taken place among Jews, Christians and Muslims — and there are many, precisely because of important shared theological ground. While I must honor the requirements of contemporary religious studies in its special attention to the social and political context of the development of religion, I do not want to reduce Islamic religion to its political dimension and further obscure the heart of the tradition. That would be like ignoring the teachings of Christ, while looking solely at the legacy of intra- and inter-religious politics, power struggles, war and the perversions in social justice that have taken place in Christian history. Moreover, while a focus on the social and political dimensions of religion could conceivably lead to a first and critical step in authentic dialogue, that of acknowledging the great social injustices committed or tolerated by religious institutions, it would be ignoring the very tools *conceived within religion* that could offer the psychological and spiritual insight, the personal and communal growth, and the healing that would prevent the repetition of the cycle of alienation and violence.

For me it has been in looking at Christian and Muslim spiritual ('mystical') traditions that elements of "common ground" are most apparent, many of which either parallel or cast new insight on "the other." It has been particularly through focusing on the theme of "wisdom," as it exists in the variety of world religions,^[3] that I try to bring into students' consideration the heart and goal of the religious life: the reality of inner transformation that has "concrete" manifestations of in terms of

clarity in self-understanding,^[4] compassion for one's fellow human beings (and hence, the quest for justice), and a sense of unity in/with the source of truth and life. In the context of undergraduate education, a time when many students experience disaffection with religion as they struggle with issues of identity, morality and commitment at various levels, looking at the "wisdom" of other traditions can shed new light on spiritual resources within one's own tradition that one may not have been aware of before one's "seeing it in the other."

The process may also evoke questions about the nature of the development of religious language, imagery and doctrine in their own religion and in religion in general. In bringing the two worlds of inter-religious dialogue and history of wisdom traditions together, I hope to address issues of academic content, pedagogy and the human need for interiority/reflection.

In this paper I will briefly mention three "wisdom-related" themes in traditional Islamic literature (and these themes emerge in written and oral traditions, in both "learned" religio-philosophical discourse and the popular "sufi story" that carried Islamic wisdom teachings across the globe^[5]) that have proved successful in sparking interest in, and dialogue about, analogous types of discourse and theological themes in Christianity.

The first theme is that of knowledge and its sources. One of the fundamental religious questions in Islam — as in all monotheistic religions — is the question, how do I know about God? About the world? About my self? The related question is the question of certitude. One way this theme emerges in Islam is in the context of the role of the angel. The belief in angels is one of the fundamental tenets of Islamic belief, along with the belief in one God, the "prophets — including Jesus and John the Baptist — and holy books," and a final judgment "in the end time." The commentaries on the meaning of the many Quranic verses mentioning Gabriel and the angels are used as opportunities to discuss what is unique about human knowledge (in contradistinction to other orders of nature, e.g., angels and animals, or "other" — "baser" and "higher" — orders of knowledge within ourselves.) For example, there is literature that emphasizes the intermediary role of Gabriel in the "descent" (*anzala*) of the Quran to the Prophet, the event of which becomes a model for the "receptive," "transcendental" (sacred), and unitive character of all human knowledge, whether it be in the understanding/reading of the *ayat* (the verses) of

the Quran (the Arabic word *ayat* means both "verses" and "signs") or in the understanding/reading of "the *ayat* (signs) of God on the horizons (Interpreted as knowledge of the natural order) and in yourselves" (interpreted as the interior self, which potentially mirrors the divine names and attributes)¹⁶¹. Thus the role of the angel is linked with the concept of logos ("word") and God's spirit,¹⁷ denoting that we know by virtue of our participation in divine knowledge (reminiscent of Augustine and all neo-Platonic epistemologies). The language of the angel also becomes a way of thinking about the nature of revelation and inspiration. The angel is seen as that 'power' of God in the human imagination — that interface of the human and the divine — that allows the person to 'envision'/hear the 'unknowable,' in a form that the particular individual is capable of understanding (by virtue of cultural, psychological, and spiritual make-up — the boundary/ opening of their "horizons"). Discussions on the angel thus link both the creative and the interpretive dimensions of poetry, art, symbols, and visionary/revelatory/noetic experience to God's grace and illumination.) The angel, as God's "intermediatrix," becomes part of the discourse that links ideas about knowledge ('natural', 'revealed', poetic) and psychology (that is, what enhances or blocks receptivity to this inherent capacity to know, and more over, to see things "in their inner reality" or meaning?) In Ibn Arabi's famous *Bezels of Wisdom* (13th century), each chapter is devoted to one of the "twenty-eight" prophets, each of whom is seen as a 'word' of God, a modality of divine self-disclosure, a bezel (a setting, which holds a jewel), or setting, for wisdom. But according to Ibn Arabi and other Quranic commentators, the capacity for understanding the "inner meaning" — "wisdom dimension" — of the stories of the prophets requires a kind of knowledge that transcends intellect, a "knowledge of the heart (*qalb*)", for the heart is the meeting point of divine and human, the identity of love and knowledge, the place of "intimate colloquy" (*munajat*) between the individual and God.

"We are all the children of Adam, and there is only one God and one prayer....God said to man: 'Your wisdom is a resplendent light, and I am the power within that wisdom. The innermost heart is My kingdom...When you understand this, you will live in unity. Therefore, when you study the Quran and other scriptures, you must understand the inner meaning, place it deep inside, and look at it with understanding. Then speak the words of God with God, who is your

wisdom. Speak God's truth with God, who is truth itself. Demonstrate the qualities of God, who is those qualities....Be within the justice of God and do what is just. Be within the compassionate eyes of God and then look at the world. Be in the state of God's peacefulness and try to give peace to the world."...Until the day you find this state within yourself, you will only be studying the separations and differences that exist between races and religions...." ¹⁶¹

This is the heart emptied of its self-willed desires and the "bound" (*taqlid*) intellect and is thereby capable of knowing "through God's knowledge."¹⁶¹ It is interesting that in many commentaries the figure of the angel is used to show the limitation of angelic knowledge when compared to human knowledge (an idea spoken of in the Quranic creation narratives). In these commentaries (again Ibn Arabi is a well-known example), wisdom is associated with a less rigid, more flexible and comprehensive knowledge that transcends intellect, a cognitive capacity unique to humans precisely because they consist of *both* spirit (and intellect) and body (and emotion), precisely because of the giving-up-of self implied in the act of unitive love. We cannot go into an in depth analysis here, but one can see how even this one theme of the role and meaning of "the angel" leads to important questions for religious studies as to the development and meaning of theological language/doctrine within religion, the question of how, why and to what extent religions appropriate and transform previous religious and philosophical traditions in light of new experience, the question of how the language of religious experience and the language of theology shape cultural attitudes, values, actions (e.g., the place and value of the non-rational cognition, the question of body, emotions, nature as vehicles or obstacles to knowledge of self and God), the question of whether these varying forms of religious expression (which speak of divine self-disclosure) refer/point to the same ontological reality, and the religious/existential question of do these finely honed doctrines hold relevance or meaning *for me*? That is, do I have resources in my religious world view that link, give coherency to, and provide guidance for my outer and inner (spiritual, psychological, artistic) worlds. The theme of wisdom, with its setting in the highly nuanced religious language of angel, word, logos, spirit, ['sacred'] heart, revelation and inspiration, are ways Islam and Christianity express common religious concern, especially that of honoring God as source of being and life.¹⁶¹

Closely related to the theme of knowledge, is the theme of the journey to self-knowledge and ultimately to union with God. The most famous of the journey narratives in Islam is the *mir'aj* ('ascension') experience of Muhammad to the Throne of God (reminiscent of biblical "throne narratives," especially Ezekiel), which began circulating in the second Islamic century (Eighth century C.E.), and which, in Dante-esque imagery, describes Muhammad's journey through the various levels of heavens (where he meets the prophets) and hells, corresponding to the levels of being/the heavens the astronomical cosmos of the day as well as to the experience of individuals in the "hereafter" depending on the configuration of their life's deeds. Gabriel is Muhammad's guide and interpreter of the meaning of what he sees. When Muhammad nears the Throne of God, Gabriel can go no further, and Muhammad must "close his eyes and see through his heart" in order to "see"/know God. Another example of journey poems in Muslim literature — perhaps the most well-known — is Attar's *The Language of the Birds* (12th century, the title taking its imagery from Quran 27:12, a reference to Solomon's God-given ability to understand the secret of divine love as it is revealed in the inner states of all beings), comparable in many ways to Dante's *Divine Comedy* and Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. Here a group of 30 birds of various sorts, led by a hoopie (who represents the divine messengers — prophets and angels — and who serves as a kind of counselor-explainer of the various events experienced by the birds), sets out on a journey to find the King of the birds, mythical Simurgh (symbol for God). The birds correspond both to the various types of characters in the human family and to the various tendencies and forces within the human mind, emotions, and spirit that aid and hinder one's progress. When they arrive to find the Simurgh — which is a play on words, for Si means 30 and Murgh means bird — they 'realize' how they have come to know/experience the Simurgh/King Solomon (Divine Wisdom)/God in themselves. The bird's/soul's pilgrimage is the unending self-discovery of the creative love which is the ground of all being. However, that self-discovery is found through and in the "movements of love" with love's experiences of absence, longing, suffering and incompleteness as well as union and joy. Ultimately (and here we have echoes of Augustine), all forms of love and longing are expressions (however distorted) of the innate desire to 'return' to the primordial state of unity with God. These journey narratives, as well as the currently more well-known (because of recent translations) poems of Rumi became stories of (potentially) every individual's

journey and teaching tools within the context of the many lay "sufi" (Muslim spirituality) orders, which cultivated a 'science' of self-understanding, not simply in terms of the do's and don'ts of the law, but in terms of the universal human tendencies that keep people from inner balance and authenticity, development in awareness of the misery (the self-created hells) experienced in the triple-alienation — alienation from self, from others, from God — and the possibility of experiencing integration of the 'selves' and the concomitant unity with fellow human beings and God. Some examples of these themes follow in the verses of Rumi (who is still quoted in daily life in Turkey and elsewhere in the Islamic world). Here Rumi speaks of the movement toward God as consisting in the process of "death to the old selves" symbolized by the traditional "kingdoms" of mineral (being "ruled" by the most matter-bound and congealed self), plant (the forces of torpor, insensitivity), animal life (being ruled by the forces of anger, ego-desire, savagery, domination), and human life (which for Muslims, means the self who lives as the polished mirror reflecting the divine names and qualities — mercy, compassion, patience, justice, etc.):

*I lived for thousands and thousands of years as a mineral
And then I died and became a plant.
And I lived for thousands and thousands of years as a plant
And then I died and became an animal.
And I lived for thousands and thousands of years as an animal.
And then I died and became a human being.
Tell me, what have I ever lost by dying.⁽¹¹⁾*

On the forces within that rule us: The images in Rumi's lexicon are multivalent. "Woman" sometimes means the self that "desires," sometimes the "Divine-creative" — that divine source within that gives birth to new life and knowledge/wisdom.

*If in worldly things
You set the course for your wife
But inside, the woman whom you desire rules you—
That's the way it is with human beings...
Muhammad said that a woman rules over a man
who has some development.
But ignorant men dominate a woman because
The savagery of the wild animal is just beneath their skin.
Tenderness and constant love belong to human life,
Constant anger and desire belong to animal life.
A woman is some light rays coming from the holy one.
She is not, quote, "my woman who belongs to me," unquote.
All creativity lies in her.
All creativity lies in her.*

On the depth of love: Rumi capsulizes in a few verses the sum of Attar's *Conference of the Birds*, the realization of one's love and one's being as grounded in the divine love. Like the Christian mystics, John of the Cross, who uses the *Song of Songs* as a model of the divine-human relation, and Mechthild of Magdeburg,^[12] who uses the language of courtly love, the language of human love, indeed the experience of love, according to Rumi and Attar — in all its aspects of longing, absence, self-giving, union — best reflects the divine-human relation.

There's no love in me without your being,
no breath without that. I once thought
I could give up this longing, then thought again,
But I *couldn't continue being human*.

Indeed Rumi, in his interpretation of the Islamic doctrine that God has sent the same message from the beginning of time through all his prophets and saints, suggests that our feelings of religious difference are ultimately grounded in the incompleteness of love. Hence mature faith, which is matured love, would engender the overcoming of feelings of religious separation. Rumi would not be the first mystic whose inspired utterances challenged the boundaries of tradition.

Two hands, two feet, two eyes, good,
as it should be, but no separation
of the Friend and your loving.
Any dividing there
makes other untrue distinctions like "Jew,"
and "Christian," and "Muslim."

The last theme I will most briefly mention is the theme of wisdom engendering the experience, the change in perception, of seeing the divine presence in all things, including the world of nature. It would seem that religions have resources within themselves to challenge a purely quantitative 'secular' view of nature. Christianity has within itself elements that counter an approach to the world — and a study of the world — that does not include an appreciation of its qualitative dimension of life. Bonaventure advised against believing that "reading is sufficient without unction, speculation without devotion, investigation without wonder, observation without joy, work without piety, knowledge without love,

understanding without humility, endeavor without grace, reflection [of the soul] as a mirror without divinely inspired wisdom."^[13] An approach to nature, to our world, that sees in it the vestiges of God (for Islam, the "signs" of God, as mentioned earlier) is an area in which Christian and Muslim spiritualities meet. But this approach does not come "natural" in our era of quantification, consumerization, commodification. Without the cultivation of wisdom, and thus without the cultivation of a contemplative dimension, one is seeing the world through a partial and distortive lens.

Muslim wisdom teachers often communicated poetically what the Muslim philosophers, such as Avicenna, had spoken of didactically: that all things come into being through divine love and all things return to their source because of divine love. And this love is what moves the universe. Certainly this view of nature and its implications is one where Muslim and Christian dialogue could begin. I will end with a last poem of Rumi that discusses the love and 'sacrifice of self' that are the essence of life and its "natural" movement toward God. The primary sin according to Islamic tradition is forgetfulness — of our true nature, of our primordial unity with God. Such poems were written as occasions to remember.

*Ecstatic love is an ocean
And the milky way is a flake of foam floating on that ocean
The stars wheel around the north pole
And ecstatic love running in a wheel turns them
If there were no ecstatic love
The whole world would be stuck
You think a piece of flint would turn into a plant otherwise?*

*Grass agrees to die so that it can rise up and receive a little of the animal enthusiasm
And the animal soul in turn sacrifices itself for what?
To help that wind, the one light after which Mary became with child
Without that wind all creatures on earth would be stiff as a glacier
Instead of being locust-like
Searching night and day for green things flying
Every bit of dust climbs toward the secret one like a sapling
Every bit of dust climbs toward the secret one like a sapling
It climbs and says nothing
And that silence is the wild craze of the secret One.*

REFERENCES

1. See Maurice Borrmans, *Guidelines for Dialogue between Christians and Muslims: Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue*, trans. Marston Speight, Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1981. *Nostra Aetate*, No. 3 affirms "striving sincerely for mutual understanding [between Christians and Muslims]. On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safeguarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace, and freedom."
2. This is not to say that Muslims are not clear on the factors that feed the fires of Muslim militancy and fanaticism, the central one being the lack of resolution to the problem of Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands, the inability to enforce U.N. Resolutions or the Oslo accords that could change this situation, and the continued appropriation and demolition of Palestinian homes to build new settlements for the Jewish population. While no situation can justify indiscriminate acts of violence, and indeed these evils are illegal under Islamic law, this situation functions as a symbol of a unjust colonial "present" and is a major catalyst in the eruption of anti-west rhetoric and violence.
3. I am using the term "wisdom" to denote primarily that genre of religious literature that speaks of the interior 'journey', cultivated in contemplation within the context of the life of a faith community. In the traditions I have studied, especially Christianity and Islam, but also in Hinduism and Buddhism, there is a common theme of a kind of cognition, sought in contemplation/experienced at times 'ecstatically,' that 'comprehends' but transcends the limits of reason or intellect, rendering a way of life that seeks "the good (including the common good) the true, and the beautiful." In Judaism, whose notion of wisdom influences the concept in Christian and Muslim religion, wisdom is not only counsel on the 'good' life but is a kind of first hypostasis, a "pure effusion of the glory of the Almighty...she is the refulgence of eternal light" (Book of Wisdom 7:25-26, similar to the language of "word" and "holy spirit" in Christianity).
4. In my affirmation of self-understanding as integral to mature religion, I am appropriating not only traditional religions' understanding of growth in knowledge of God, self, and world, but the conclusions drawn by contemporary psychologists who see a relationship between cognitive, moral, and faith development (e.g., Jean Piaget, Erik Erikson, Lawrence Kohlberg, and James Fowler).
5. There are both highly philosophical expressions of epistemological themes, such as the well-known 10th century Ibn Sina — the Avicenna — quoted often by Aquinas, the 12th century Suhrawardi — founder of the Hikma-Ilahi (divine wisdom) school of thought, the 13th century Ibn Arabi — the most famous expositor of Islamic *irfan* (mystical) philosophy (See *Bezels of Wisdom*, in the *Classics of Western Spirituality Series*, Paulist Press), and popular expressions of wisdom teaching, such as the celebrated 13th century poet, Jalal al-Din Rumi, 15th century Ibn Ata Allah al-Iskandari, well known for his *The Aphorisms* (literally, the 'wisdoms') and the 20th century Sri Lankan "wisdom teacher," M.R. Bawa Muhaiyadeen.
6. From Quran chapter 51.
7. Muslim commentators associated Gabriel with God's "spirit" as well as God's word because of the Quranic discussion of Gabriel bringing God's spirit (Jesus) to Mary.
8. M.R. Bawa Muhaiyadeen, *Islam and World Peace*. This is the work of a contemporary "wisdom teacher." One must be careful in using sources called "sufi" (Islamic mystical); there is much in popular and pop spirituality called 'sufi' these days. For introduction to the classical sources, see Anne Marie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam*, North Carolina University Press.
9. This theological notion of the heart is seen as implied in the meaning of the often quoted "divine saying" communicated by Muhammad: "When my servant loves Me (God), I become the eye with which he sees, the ear with which he hears, the hand with which he holds, the leg with which he walks."
10. "Shared common concerns" does not mean agreement, as the historic theological division between Eastern and Western Christian churches on just these issues—the relationship between God, word, and spirit — attests. I recommend a close reading of Bonaventure's, *The Soul's journey into God*, trans. Ewert Cousins, in the *Classics in Western Spirituality Series*, Paulist Press, especially the Prologue for themes of the relationship between wisdom and knowledge, the entire journey signifying the idea of "unity of knowledge" in God (of course, in its Christian context of "through the door of Christ.")
11. The Rumi verses are from the many works of translations by Coleman Barks. The ones here are from his translations in "Poems of Rumi" from Audio-Literature.
12. See E.Z. Brunn and G. Epiney-Burgard, *Women Mystics in Medieval Europe*. New York, Paragon. 1989.
13. Bonaventure, *The Soul's journey into God*, trans. Ewert Cousins. New York: Paulist Press. 1978. p.55

THE GARDENER AND THE MATHEMATICIAN: A TALE OF TWO WISDOM FIGURES

by John T. Saccoman

Mathematics has been described as a "ladder for mystical as well as rational thought." [Bronowski 155] Disparate ancient societies all developed numbering systems independent of each other — it is obvious that the need and ability to do so is at the core of our being. Aristotle's *Metaphysics* contains a summary of the work of the Pythagoreans, the followers of Pythagoras who "revered mathematics as the key to knowledge." [Luce 37] Aristotle said, "being schooled in such studies they considered that the principles of mathematics were the principles of all things." [Luce 37]

If one accepts the notion that information leads to knowledge, and that knowledge leads to individual truth and ultimately to overall truth, or wisdom, then it is important to have an idea of the meaning of this ultimate goal.

I define wisdom as the ability to make informed judgments based on experiences and/or observations. Wisdom for me also connotes an internal quality of self-satisfaction, as the Latin word for wisdom, *sapientia*, is also the root for savor, to enjoy with delight. This implies a component of repose attached to wisdom. However, I believe that the two most important qualities of wisdom are its humility, i.e., the truly wise are not boastful, and its asymptotic aspect, i.e. wisdom is to be sought constantly but is not necessarily attained.

I believe that a great deal of knowledge in mathematics is in itself not wisdom unless it is accompanied by a humble quality. Mathematics is a very humbling discipline. Ask anybody.

On the other hand, the asymptotic nature of wisdom, which casts it similar to the concept of a "limit" in calculus, is a bit less tangible. Nevertheless, this quality is evident in mathematics study as well, and is why I find the pursuit of theoretical mathematics so in tune with the pursuit of wisdom. This ability to learn and grow is an intrinsic quality of wisdom, and the pursuit of wisdom in one endeavor is often a lynchpin for wisdom in seemingly unrelated arenas. That is why, in my judgment, the pursuit of wisdom through mathematics and through the Catholic faith is intertwined.

I have been blessed in my personal and professional life with an exposure to some diverse people possessing wisdom, and I would like to share two of them with you now.

Both lived until the mid 1990s into their mid-80s. One was a prolific mathematician, the other a prolific gardener. One has co-authored more than 1,500 papers in mathematics (they are still being published a year and a half after his death), while the other's formal education ended after completion of the eighth grade. I am speaking about Paul Erdos, mathematician, and Mario Saccoman, my grandfather, respectively.

Many in mathematics believe strongly that if a person has properly pursued its study for a long time, it brings about a desire to share his or her knowledge with others. Many do this and become teachers of the subject. Research and the proof of new theorems bring with them an obligation to share the result with the larger mathematics community. In this way, mathematical research actually becomes another way of teaching. To Erdos, talking about mathematics was "preaching."

Anna Quindlen, former *New York Times* columnist, wrote:

I got a fortune cookie that said, 'To remember is to understand'. I have never forgotten it. A good judge remembers what it was like to be a lawyer. A good editor remembers being a writer. A good parent remembers what it was like to be a child." [Quindlen]

And, I would add, a good teacher remembers what it was like to be a student.

Erdos sometimes referred to the existence of a *The Book*, a "transfinite book whose pages contain all the theorems and their best possible proofs...The Book is held by God, who only very rarely allows us to catch a glimpse of a page. But when that happens, then we see mathematics in all its beauty. [Bollobas 219]"

Although he did not mean for *The Book* to be taken literally, I believe this is an excellent way to conceptualize mathematical truth. This view of the study of mathematics certainly brings out both its asymptotic nature and its humbling quality; this would put his thinking in line with the Catholic tradition of the search for truth even though he was raised in another religious tradition. He was Jewish and had been denied entry into the U.S. for 10 years because of his alleged communist sympathies (although Bela Bollobas, an associate of Erdos,

points out that this was in part the result of his insistence on entering the U.S. on his Hungarian passport).

My grandfather, Mario similarly possessed an almost fatalistic view of life, in no small part attributable to his narrow survival of childbirth (his mother and a twin died) and his difficult experience as a laborer during the Great Depression. This fatalism was tempered by an unshakably strong Catholic faith; he attended morning Mass virtually every day of the final 10 years of his life.

Erdos never had a "proper" teaching job, and since the 1950s, he was never housed for any great length of time at a single institution. He basically traveled the world, staying somewhere for a time, posing problems, doing research, and then he would leave to go somewhere else. In this way, although he had no students in the "formal" sense, he in reality influenced and mentored thousands of mathematicians the world over. Bollobas, now a fellow at Trinity College in Cambridge, writes of Erdos [Bollobas 209]:

With his motto "another roof, another proof," he would arrive on the doorstep of a mathematical friend, bringing news of discoveries and problems: "declaring 'his brain open'" he would plunge into discussions about the work of his hosts, and after a few days of furious work on their problems, he would take off for another place, often leaving his exhausted hosts to work out the details....

In his obituary in *The New York Times*, Gina Kolata wrote:

Concentrating fully on mathematics, Erdos traveled from meeting to meeting, carrying a half-empty suitcase and staying with mathematicians wherever he went. His colleagues took care of him, lending him money, feeding him, buying him clothes and even doing his taxes. In return, he showered them with ideas and challenges — with problems to be solved and brilliant ways of attacking them.

Dr. Laszlo Babai of the University of Chicago, in a tribute written to celebrate Erdos' 80th birthday, said that Erdos' friends "care for him fondly, repaying in small ways for the light he brings into their homes and offices." [Kolata]

Thus, Erdos had an influence on people far beyond the problems they attempted to solve together. There are countless stories of journeyman mathematicians who received calls from him completely out of the blue, which would subsequently result in fruitful collaborative work.

Mathematicians speak of their "Erdos number"; if one co-authored a paper with him, his Erdos number is "1", and those who collaborated with a "1" are a "2", etc. This reflects mathematicians' need to have experienced a wisdom figure.

His adaptive, almost chameleon-like ability to work with so many different people points to a wisdom and insight into humans that one would not expect of a stereotypical mathematician. I believe that this wisdom was a result of his pursuit of mathematical truth, not in spite of it. For mathematicians in particular and academics in general, research is very often conducted with a kind of "tunnel vision." We can learn much from his 'catholic' example.

Mario, on the other hand, almost never traveled, particularly after his beloved Helen died in 1990. Then this man, who had never cooked a meal or run a washing machine, had to learn how to do these things for himself at the age of 81. What he brought to these new challenges was common sense and a virtuous nature, borne of the wisdom of his experiences, and informed by his strong faith. He, like Erdos, was an embodiment of the adaptive quality of wisdom. We can learn much from his Catholic example.

How does wisdom bring this adaptive quality? In the case of both of these men, I believe it was their humbling yet unaffected pursuits. Mario's gardening was a very basic communion with the forces of nature: the ability to work with rocky strips of urban New Jersey soil to grow aesthetically pleasing flowers and useful vegetables goes right to the core of human existence. On the other hand, Erdos relied almost exclusively on elementary mathematics for his insight, a "first principles" approach that is at once very difficult and yet very natural. According to Bollobas,

When Erdos started his career, elementary methods were out of fashion...The mathematical world is ruled by big theories straddling several branches of mathematics... Erdos believed that, no matter how important big theories are, they cannot constitute all of mathematics. There are remarkably many natural questions which one is unable to attack with sophisticated machines... Erdos proved over and over again that elementary methods are frequently effective in attacking these 'untractable' problems, and that they often provide enlightening proofs of main-line results...an elementary proof need not be simple: often the opposite is the case. [Bollobas 210]

The Book to which Erdos referred, contains short and snappy proofs, proofs that mathematicians would judge to be aesthetically pleasing. Bollobas describes it "as if lightning allowed us to see some detail clearly." He adds:

When it comes to substantial results, the best we can feel is that the global idea comes from The Book...a book [sic] proof easily becomes part of the mathematical consciousness. [Bollobas 220]

That is a key contention: I believe that Bollobas' conscious use of a lower case "b" means that, while we strive to The Book proof, most of what we do is in a book. It also has been my contention not only that there is an obligation or compulsion to share mathematical truth, but also that a teacher in a discipline with as rigid a structure as mathematics brings to the classroom a little bit of every teacher he or she has had. This is not confined to the historical figures of the past. I mean actual classroom influences, which for me began with Sister Mary O'Neill in the sixth grade, continuing through the recently deceased Reverend Martin Foran in high school, Dr. Bruce Crabtree in graduate school, and right up through my thesis advisor, Dr. Charlie Suffel. In this way, the study of mathematics is a way to tap in to a wisdom tradition that has existed for ages.

This is an aspect of what Mario did as well: he advised us on how to plant a vegetable garden, and he passed along a Catholic faith tradition that will continue long after his death. Many in mathematics and the sciences reject the notion of a Supreme Being; in fact, as Tekippe writes, "This is what is most negative about modern enlightenment: its hostility to the Christian enlightenment." [Tekippe 156]

In fact, the dichotomous nature of their wisdom is the age-old tug-of-war between science and common sense. Tekippe writes, "Common sense knowing...cannot be the final form of human knowing...it fails to be open to the full scope of being." [Tekippe 152] He further asserts that science, while wedded to logic, is not ultimate knowing either. "In its concern with the concrete, [the sciences] are concerned with bodies, not the spirit. The exclusion of the spirit is also the exclusion of active intelligence." [Tekippe 152]

One man did mathematics, one man tended gardens and attended daily Mass — how could they both be wisdom figures? The differences are striking; in terms of formal education, you cannot get any further apart than a one-room schoolhouse on Chiefton Hill in West Virginia and a symposium at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

However, each man's wisdom was rooted in a humility that did not allow him to "put on airs." It would have been very easy for Mario to be dismissive of others in his role as an "elder statesman" and constantly offer his advice and opinions, whether or not they were solicited. It would have been just as easy for Erdos to limit his contact to the great mathematicians of the day, such as Bollobas, Graham and Chung, and collaborate only with them. He could have stayed at a single institution and lived with more material comforts. Nevertheless, he chose to work with others as well, offering monetary prizes to graduate students for solving problems he posed. These two men were the epitome of that humble quality of wisdom.

One man "stayed put," one traveled exhaustively, yet both taught a lesson that those in academia sometimes forget: to treat every individual as worthwhile. They came at this lesson from vastly different outlooks, but I believe that that is their most important legacy. When a professor pontificates about "students today," when a teacher brushes off students seeking help, or when a student's questions are dealt with in a less than patient manner, we are forgetting the example of these two great men.

Would Mario and Erdos have been able to communicate with each other? Since I am presenting them as paragons of wisdom in distinctly different spheres of influence, one may well argue that they would not. Erdos dozed off at the dinner table when the conversation wasn't mathematical, and Mario might have had difficulty comprehending Erdos' accented English.

I imagine both men in their dotage sitting on a bench on a boardwalk by the New Jersey shore, my favorite contemplative spot. Erdos might be at the end of a long walk following a conference, and Mario may have gone on a bus trip with his senior citizen group. I doubt Erdos would convert to Catholicism after their conversation, or even stay in one place long enough to cultivate a garden, nor would Mario begin studying mathematics. However, Erdos is known to have had penetrating conversations on a variety of subjects, including politics. Perhaps Mario's avidly pro-union stance would have provided the common ground they needed to strike up a conversation. I believe the adaptive quality of their wisdom would provide them with the ability to converse.

Erdos might discuss his frequent visits to New Jersey, where he had a room in the house of the "power couple" of the mathematics world, Ronald Graham and Fan Chung. Mario would say, with the pride that he reserved for such discussions, that his son and grandson were in the same "business" as Erdos.

If they were not wise men, they may not have talked.

In their wisdom, they would seek to pass the time trying to learn about someone else. The result might be a greater understanding of the world through conversation with someone from a vastly different world. Their wisdom, never fully attained, would continue to grow.

And who knows? Maybe my Erdos number would be "1".

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RE-THINKING EMBODIMENT IN THE LIGHT OF THE INCARNATION

by Judith Chelius Stark

By a curious juxtaposition, I happened to be reading Mary Pipher's book *Reviving Ophelia* while participating in the Catholic Studies Faculty Seminar on *Knowledge and Wisdom*.^[1] While immersed in discussions and readings, both traditional and contemporary, about the pursuit and place of wisdom at a Catholic university, I was also reflecting on Piper's work dealing with the complex problems faced by today's adolescent girls. At first it seemed that these two areas of discourse could not be further apart. But after a day or two I began to think about the possible connections between them and what kept going through my mind were general questions about the place of the human body in Western thought as well as more particular concerns in today's society, e.g., the current cult of thinness and the obsession with physical appearance. The media and advertising are filled with images that make negotiating adolescence and young adulthood highly problematic for girls. (This is not to say that boys achieve adulthood any more easily than girls, but many of the problems faced by boys are different in kind from those confronting girls.)

In the course of the seminar, I thought a great deal about what the wisdom of the Western tradition has to say about embodiment and the human condition. The results were not particularly encouraging, either for adolescent girls or for the rest of us, for that matter.

In going back to the roots of the Greek experience, it is worth noting that the term "philosophia" uses the word for love (*philo*) that describes the love one has for friends, not *eros*. If those ancient Greeks had used the word *eros* to describe that strange activity begun by Thales, such usage would have introduced other sets of associations belonging to sexual desire, including exclusivity, possession, jealousies, etc. The fact that the term *philo* is used evokes the sense of being in the loving company of friends which is made richer, not competitive or divisive, by the presence of others in the circle of friendship. So, philosophy, whatever else this strange activity may turn out to be, involves the love of friendship and being in the presence of wisdom as one would with a close and intimate circle of friends.

Now how does this relate to embodiment? For both Aristotle and Augustine, the experience of friendship and the actual, physical presence of one's friends is a very important part of a full, human life. In Aristotle's view,

the flowering of friendship also has important implications for a full and well-functioning civil life in the community.^[2] In Augustine's case, he lived his life surrounded by friends, wrote one of the most beautiful descriptions of friendships ever penned (after the death of a close friend) and, practically single-handedly, transferred the classical ideal of the close community of friends (that had been articulated in political and philosophical terms) to the communal life of the saints in the city of God.^[3]

Augustine's stature and significance at the end of the classical era and at the beginning of the Middle Ages would be difficult to overstate. For both good and ill, he was one of the most important bridge figures in transmitting Platonic thought into Christianity. That transmission itself is a long and complicated story, but one aspect that ties in with my musings relates to the Christian view of the body. It is very difficult to get a clear Christian view, that is, one that has not been highly influenced by Platonism (and to some extent, by Stoicism as well). In a number of Augustine's works, e.g., *The Nature of the Good*, it is very revealing to see him attempting to integrate Platonism into Judaism and Christianity, especially in light of the Biblical insistence on the fundamental goodness of all of God's creation ("...and God saw that it was good." Genesis 1: 10, 17, 31).^[4] Augustine's efforts on this topic are not entirely successful; indeed, perhaps with these irreconcilable differences, his project might be doomed from the outset: Platonism with its denigration of the material universe and the human body (it was said that Plotinus, the last great exponent of Platonism in late antiquity, was ashamed to be in a body) and Judaism-Christianity's insistence on a good creation created by a benevolent God. In many of his writings, it is clear that Augustine remains highly ambivalent about the material world: as a bishop he berates himself for being enthralled by the spectacle of the hound chasing the rabbit across the field and with being too caught up in the beautiful melodies even of sacred songs.^[5] So susceptible is he to the senses that he gives this warning: the world is beautiful, but don't be distracted by it and don't get caught up in it and lose sight of the one who created it.

Not only is the world suspect, the site of human physicality — the body — is also rendered suspect with

human sexuality as the most carefully watched suspect of all possible offenders. For Augustine, the sex act itself, even within the legitimate bounds of marriage, is debasing in and of itself while also being the medium for the transmission of original sin.

Plato's attitudes toward the physical universe, the human body and eros are very complex and cannot be recounted fully here. Suffice it to say that for Plato eros was central to the project of philosophy (as seen in the *Symposium* where Socrates learns wisdom from the woman, Diotima), while the body must be carefully controlled by reason in his hierarchical schema of the individual person and in the ideal community (*Republic*).

Even after this brief excursus, many questions emerge: what accounts for this persistent and pervasive denigration of the physical universe, the human body and sexuality? Why is sexuality most typically associated with women and the seductive attractiveness of their bodies, as though men would not have sexual urges had they not been "tempted" by women? Why have these dualities and value preferences persisted: soul over body; spirit over flesh; mind over matter; reason over appetites; male over female? Is it possible to create new frameworks and paradigms that may supersede these dualities and help us re-think the value and importance of the physical world without reverting to Nietzschean critique (all is interpretation), Marxist materialism or unabashed hedonism?

To return to my starting point: can any of this help us revive Ophelia? What about embodiment in late 20th century Western cultures ... if anything, popular culture is obsessed with the body, with physical appearance (especially for girls and women), with the cult of thinness, eating disorders, physical fitness and sexual display. A great deal of feminist writing over the last 30 years has analyzed, exposed and decried these attitudes, especially as they are inscribed on women's bodies. Is it possible to find new ways of thinking about the human body that overcomes these obsessions with the body, on the one hand, and the denigration of the body in Western philosophy and Christianity on the other?

During the course of the seminar three lines of thinking occurred to me that may provide some fruitful ways to steer a new course. At this point, these lines are sketchy and exploratory and would require more work to draw out their implications. Here, at least, I suggest the beginnings of the project: first, wisdom as a feminine/feminist principle; second, revisiting the position of Mary in Christian thinking; and third, drawing out the implications of the Incarnation for re-thinking the notion of

embodiment. Wisdom as a feminine/feminist principle: there is a large and growing body of literature that explores wisdom as the feminine expression of God's presence in the world. The Hebrew scriptures have a rich tradition in which wisdom clearly expresses the female principle with metaphors of wisdom as divine daughter, and by extension, of Israel as the bride of God (when Israel is in the true and right relationship with God; the prophetic literature also uses metaphors of the unfaithful spouse and the harlot for a sinful Israel). These metaphors also appear in the Christian scriptures, especially in Pauline texts with the Church as the "new Israel" and the "bride of Christ" (also in Revelations 21:2).¹⁶

Both Greek and Latin use the feminine nouns for wisdom — *sophia* and *sapientia*. It is worth exploring *philosophia* as the creative combination of the male paradigm of friendship (in the classical world where friendship could only exist among equals, thereby excluding women and men from a lower social class) along with *sophia* as the principle of wisdom in the female form. Perhaps this effort could tap into the mythic stream of the worship of goddesses, like Gaia, the earth mother who is then overcome by the succession of male gods, Cronos and Zeus.¹⁷ Even in the reign of Zeus, wisdom is personified by the goddess Athena who springs fully formed (armor and all) from the head of Zeus. What kind of wisdom is expressed by the priestesses of Delphi whose mystical mutterings are rendered articulate by the male priests? Who is Diotima, the wise woman, whom Socrates names as his teacher? It is important to note that with the exception of Gaia, at the very beginning of *Theogony* (and her power quickly fades with her only strategy being to ally herself with her son against her husband), all these expressions of wisdom as feminine are mediated and then expressed and controlled by men. Finally, what would wisdom as a feminist principle look like — a kind of wisdom that is integrated, complete, strong, fruitful and nurturing?

The second possible line of thinking revolves around the position of Mary in Christianity. Pious and traditional views of Mary have been very problematic for contemporary feminists since these views reinforce many of the stereotypes about submission and assigning women their "proper role." However, in the last 15 years, a great deal of work has been done on the cult of the Virgin (especially in Mediterranean countries) as the recapitulation of the more ancient goddess worship or, at least, as the expression of the importance of the mother figure in popular piety. Both of these strategies express the incompleteness of construing God exclusively and solely in masculine terms. Related to these explorations is the

recent interest in Catholic theological circles to declare Mary the redeemer of all humanity. Drawing out these implications would emphasize the work of women in redemption and bring the female principle closer to a central doctrine of Christianity. There have even been provocative suggestions that such a move could entail transforming the trinity into a quartet with Mary as the fourth person in the divinity.^[8]

Another Marian theme that is well worth pursuing focuses on the doctrine of Mary's bodily assumption into heaven (following in the doctrinal footsteps of Christ's bodily resurrection and ascension into heaven). This emphasis concerns a kind of valuing of the body, and of a woman's body in particular, that could help to overcome the dualisms and oppositions mentioned above. If the physical body of Christ (albeit resurrected and glorified) is worthy enough to be taken up to heaven, as is Mary's body, these are powerful assertions about the physical body and by extension about the material world as a whole. These two events then are not considered exceptions, but as the promise of a fullness of life for all humanity in a spiritual realm that does not denigrate or reject the human body.

And this leads to the third line of thinking in which a full exploration needs to be conducted of the implications of the Incarnation, not just for the full humanity of Jesus, but for the bodily condition of all persons — fully redeemed by the incarnate God. It seems to me that Christianity stands alone among the major religions of the world with the notion of the Incarnation.

It is a doctrine that Kierkegaard described as the Absurd, not in a dismissive way, but as an invitation and challenge to embrace fully the paradox that the divine and the human are inextricably joined.^[9] Do we Christians really believe this in all its radical implications — that through Jesus all human beings, and indeed all human history and the world itself, are redeemed and sanctified by the spirit of God? This is not to deny sin, suffering and evil-doing, but this line of thinking may be just what we need as a starting point to recover the value and dignity of the full human person — body, mind, spirit, emotions, appetites and aspirations. And this very well may be the beginning of wisdom — both a divine gift and a human project.

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KNOWLEDGE AND WISDOM: "WHERE IS THE POLITIKON ZOON?"

by W. King Mott, Jr.

In a world where the individual is the center of existence, it is curious to consider the notion that the idea of the person could possibly be lost. Yes, there are many references to the "people" and to "human-rights," even in our respective academic fields there are a myriad of studies involving groups and individuals, and yet the history of the 20th century reveals a world of unmatched violence and murder against untold millions. Perhaps even more ironical is that the modern era was itself born out of concern for individual autonomy.¹¹ So, to the question, what is the *politikon zoon*; and where is he? Eric Voegelin identifies a special kind of person whose end and purpose lies in "the community ... in the realm of conscious, deliberate recognition of good and evil, of right and wrong."¹² He or she is, then, a person living in communion with others who is conscious of a real living truth and in the pursuit of that truth becomes wise.

What follows is an effort to reconstruct one possibility for recovering the person — a necessary process if the person is to come to some wisdom in his lifetime and to direct his energies and work toward the common good. This notion of recovering leads to the thesis of this essay: Within the context of a ritualistic life the person is afforded the opportunity to know himself and, subsequently, to connect with other men and women in community.

Before proceeding to how ritual can assist the person in understanding him or herself, it is important to consider how the person can be lost in the first place. Contemporary society makes it difficult for *one* to perceive any benefit in the *many*. Our world-view is informed by alienation, an over developed extenuation of the human spirit. As evidence of fragmentation, consider the classroom environment where we work — a place where politicization of language both polarizes debate and discourages precise criticism. Academic pressures instruct professors and students alike that their time is money and that the objective is marketable skills. Somehow the pursuit of wisdom is marginalized.

Further, as we turn towards the new millenium, it is obvious that the scientific method has overcome the normative components that make up the person. We have choices before us that we do not fully understand. And the arts and humanities have abrogated responsibility for providing a challenge to science. It is certain,

after all, that a scientific evaluation alone is oblivious to "the foul rag and bone shop of the heart."¹³

"[T]he methodology of the physical sciences has in the modern period become the paradigmatic path to reliable knowledge and that all other disciplines — especially the arts and humanities have been diminished.... Lacking the connection with truth that they had long enjoyed, the humanities and arts became reliquaries and their Products cultural decorations."¹⁴

The state appears equally unwilling to assist in turning the individual towards wisdom or, from the political perspective, the common good. This position in the West is currently predicated upon the state's desire to protect the legal rights of citizens. The push for political and social toleration has exceeded the expectation of the most ardent liberal and, yet, J.S. Mill's depiction of intolerance lives. He writes that there is nothing "so natural to mankind as intolerance."¹⁵ In the late 20th century we are intolerant of intolerance. A close look at any public debate reveals how easily important policy questions become lost in the cult of personality.

This is all to say that we are overwhelmed by our preoccupation with the personal. Camus creates a similar solipsistic reality in *The Plague* where two physicians witness extraordinary circumstances and fail, at least initially, to see anything beyond the ordinary.

On returning to his apartment Rieux rang up his colleague Richard, one of the leading practitioners in the town. "No," Richard said, "I can't say I've noticed anything exceptional."

"No cases of fever with local inflammation?"

"Abnormally so?"

"Well," Richard said, "that depends upon what you mean by 'normal.' "¹⁶

Camus' characters share a denial of certain difficult truths. Out of over exaggerated deference to pluralism, to political correctness, to tolerance, to hyper-individualism, the necessary components of the pursuit of truth and wisdom — information and knowledge — are rounded into subjective notions that prove nothing to anyone *other* and are, then, incapable of leading to unifying wisdom. Modern nations and the citizens that

comprise them are well on the way to nihilism where all ideas are negotiated into meaninglessness. It is appropriate here to clarify that some relativity, at the right time and in the right proportion, is a good thing, but the excesses of relativism create what Elizabeth Fox-Genovese considers to be the worst form of political domination — power.^[7] Delwin Brown describes the problem well when he writes,

"In a world where there is only the unending play of difference nothing can rightly be elevated to a place of continuing validity, not even the equal entitlement of the conflicting differentia — their right to be heard, their right to equal participation in the field of discourse, and so forth. Nothing can claim permanent entitlement, nothing superiority, not even justice." ^[8]

How is it that the person will find himself or herself and what role does ritual play in this quest? First is the problem of recognition; the person must acknowledge that he is lost or incomplete — no small thing in the age of Madison Avenue. Second, once the challenge is recognized the hard work commences. This is a different sort of work and requires a different kind of energy than what we are used to, since there is no time clock or contract and the end itself may appear to be a moving target. Ultimately, the work demands that he *move* outside himself and the world that he has created and, quite literally, behold the ineffable. Einstein offered similar advice:

The more knowledge we acquire, the more mystery we find.... A human being is part of the whole, called by us the Universe, a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings as something separate from the rest — kind of optical illusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of person for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty. Nobody is able to achieve this completely, but the striving for such achievement is in itself a part of the liberation and foundation for inner security.^[9]

It is a ritualistic initiation into the world of mature men and women that will come from this leap of faith. Ancient stories from the wisdom traditions tell of individuals that are similarly transformed. James G. Frazer

in *The Golden Bough* traces common ground in development of consciousness through symbol and archetype. The culmination of these disparate traditions can be found in Socrates' insistence that truth is brought about by a difficult examination of the self,^[10] or in Jesus' 40-day temptation in the desert.^[11]

The goal is maturity — intellectual, spiritual and physical. The Greek notion is *spoudaios*. There are contemporary examples of how we acknowledge a need for maturation, perhaps most notably in religious rites of passage or even educational and professional requirements. Unfortunately, our age seems to have lost the meaning behind these acts both on an individual and communal level. More importantly, from the perspective of this examination, we have lost *a way to come to maturity*.

That our way is encumbered is not unique. The history of the world is full of complex cultures and communities that dissolve for reasons other than natural disaster.^[12] Voegelin describes a similar situation when discussing the plight of ancient Greece: "The attack on the corrupt society is not directed against this or that political abuse but against a disease of the soul."^[13] If this is the case, how do we come to "the restoration [of the soul] ... from ignorance to the truth of God, from opinion about uncertainly wavering things to knowledge of being, and from multi-farious activity to the justice of tending to one's proper sphere of action..."^[14]

The proposal before us now is that a ritualistic life addresses the tensions of existence, ultimately felt in the opposing realities of life and death. It is possible that through ritual the person will connect to an ineffable horizon of consciousness. Brown writes: "In the play of ritual enactment we engage our canonical space: encountering and obscuring, elevating and diminishing, affirming and opposing — in sum, continuing and changing the resources to be found there. Without ritual, traditions perish."^[15]

What is ritual? How does an individual participate in ritual? Merleau-Ponty insisted that the meaning that comes from ritual is "a preconscious possession of the world."^[16] Robert Fulghum writes in his recent best seller:

Rituals are repeated patterns of meaningful acts. If you are mindful of your actions, you will see the ritual patterns. If you see the patterns, you may understand them. If you understand them, you may enrich them. In this way, the habits of a lifetime become sacred.^[17]

As far as participation goes, Fulghum describes ways of choosing ritual, focusing primarily upon conscious intention. The operative idea of engaging the will and considering the possibility of affecting human reality is of great significance. J. Z. Smith in *The Bear Facts of Ritual*, says "that the ritual *resolves or overcomes* the gap or incongruity between the ideal and the actual...symbolism, myth, [and] ritual...are all incapable of overcoming disjunction. They seek, rather, to play between the incongruities."¹¹⁸

Relying upon the work of anthropologists, sociologists, theologians and philosophers, Brown goes on to describe a unique possibility that is both individualist and social. It is that "God made from one every nation to live on all the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their habitations."¹¹⁹ The operative notion of "oneness" is not unique, at least in theory, from the American political experience. Consider *E Pluribus Unum* taken from the Great Seal of the United States of America. Without doubt, this is not absolute equality or dogmatic insistence upon any single interpretation of human reality. It is a basic recognition of the human condition; all people share in a horizon of possibility grounded in flesh and decay. Additionally, what is most convincing may not be the intellectual abstractions of ritual or even ritual in the context of incense and chanting, but rather the idea that ritual is found in the most ordinary actions — if we are conscious of it. For example, in greeting others we are engaged in ritual. What comes of these conscious actions defies precise conceptualization, but we are at least genuinely innovative and conservative — literally between God and the beasts.

The transforming power of ritual is best understood through an elaboration of a canon. Inside the realities of canon the individual is capable of grasping onto meaning, quite literally acquiring the data or information necessary to ask questions and to debate. Admittedly, there is considerable ongoing negotiation and opposition in defining a canon. The attacks focus around the idea that tradition or canon "is an act of faith at odds with the evidence."¹²⁰ For this reason it is important to recognize that a *canon is neither impervious to or a victim of interpretation*; and ritual must be alive without the dulling effects of habit alone. Considered in this organic way, both canon and ritual serve to collect truth and reveal it in a wisdom tradition. The wisdom enables individuals or states to connect the fragmented pieces of experience and imagination. This is the "play" alluded to earlier. Using the knowledge of past ages, different people can

unite on a debating ground. The Socratic method exemplifies this "debating ground" beginning, as he did, each discussion with the question and, then, proceeding to "see if this is the case."¹²¹ Socrates believed that this process could approximate truth. Wisdom comes from canon, made meaningful in ritual, and it clarifies human choice by getting closer to that same truth.

If this is so, the real political challenges facing modernity are absent from the legislatures and assemblies of the world in as much as political actors fail to have a common language or experience beyond purely legalistic terms. The state would be better served by removing the encumbrances to a common experience often manifest in ritual. This is not necessarily a call for the merging of church and state. But the state must recognize that by telling no story they risk losing the person. The same is true for the academy. Once connected to these traditions and opened to ritual, it is then incumbent upon the person to challenge the story of the inherited canon because what will matter in the end is the personal effect of canon upon him.

"Ritual, perhaps the most obviously affective dimension of traditions, will be the primary datum in terms of which we seek to understand the place of affectivity in the dynamic of tradition."¹²² What is affected? It is the consciousness and awareness of existence itself that comes from intentional participation in ritual. The notion that ritual can create sacred space in the person gets to the heart of the modern dilemma and provides a chance for existential recovery to wholeness. Bronislaw Malinowski and A.R. Radcliffe-Brown both conclude that "rituals facilitate and strengthen the stability of society and life within it...[ritual can] regulate, maintain, and transmit from one generation to another the sentiments on which the constitution of society depends."¹²³

So, it is through the deepest engagement of the body and spirit that ritual initiates the turning towards maturity that Plato discusses in the *Republic*. In the context of a pluralistic society, the condition of the person is altered and he is able to connect to others beyond mere dependency. The feeling and the actions that come from that feeling are aptly described as belonging. This feeling results from the connection that all share in an experience grounded in the defense of truth and wisdom. Brown expands upon this suggesting that,

The experience of ritual "may be peculiarly apt in that role [connecting of body and spirit/commerce with things] because ritual is bodily action, and such action seems to be the most in-

clusive form of the human way of being. Action, in other words, involves feeling, willing, and intellection in a way each does not so fully require the others or action itself. Be that as it may, ritual action may be understood as at least one way we effectively express, alter and enliven, and transmit the dynamic structures of our particular traditions.^[24]

So, to conclude by returning to the question, where is the *politikon zoon*? Voegelin insisted that the person's proper place lies in "the community ... in the realm of conscious, deliberate recognition of good and evil, of right and wrong."^[25] We have suggested that the person is lost and most certainly looking to find meaning and purpose in life. In the rush to fill the void left by the absence of

canon and a ritualistic life, we are well on our way to "disneyfication" of birth, of life, of death and all of human history — in itself an interesting example of pseudo-ritualization. And yet there is so much more than can be found and, perhaps, we are beginning to recognize that truth. Ritual and the consciousness that comes from a ritualistic life are indispensable to creating and maintaining that truth. "Ritual action is a way that embodied beings register bodily the patterns of their habitations, alter and enliven these patterns, and thus make a difference to their tradition's future and their own."^[26] Once livened to know himself or herself, the person is enabled to connect with others and recognize good and evil. Imagine the implications of this in one lifetime, in the family, in the classroom or in the nation's capital.

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SCIENCE, RELIGION AND THE CORRIGIBILITY OF QUANTUM MECHANICS

by Joseph T. Maloy

*Moving of th'earth brings harmes and feares,
Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheres,
Though greater farre, is innocent.*

- John Donne

A Valediction Forbidding Mourning,
ca.1611

As in all great pivotal moments in human history, no earthquakes preceded the acts leading up to the remarkable increase in the quantity of humanity inhabiting this planet that is depicted¹¹¹ in Figure 1. So innocent were the events that occurred at the bend in the population plot that they went largely unnoticed, and remain so, or perhaps misunderstood, even now, two centuries after they took place. Understood or not, the world has been changed forever by the momentous occurrences at the close of the 18th century. With all due respect to Paul

Ehrlich, author of the fiction of the same name, this was the *population bomb*. Since it went off we have enjoyed more of everything that it is to be human at an ever-increasing rate. More love, more joy, more hatred, more anguish. More mouths to feed, more medical breakthroughs, more clients, more sales, more crackpots, more cannon fodder, more voices singing praise to God in the heavenly choir.

From a religious perspective, the bend in the curve shown in Figure 1 marks the fulfillment of the blessing in Genesis: "And God blessed them saying: increase and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it, and rule over the fishes of the sea, and the fowls of the air, and all living creatures that move upon the earth."¹²¹ The view from a scientific perspective is somewhat different. For example, the text from which Figure 1 is adapted attributes this dramatic increase in human population to modern science: "Through the use of ... synthetic fertil-

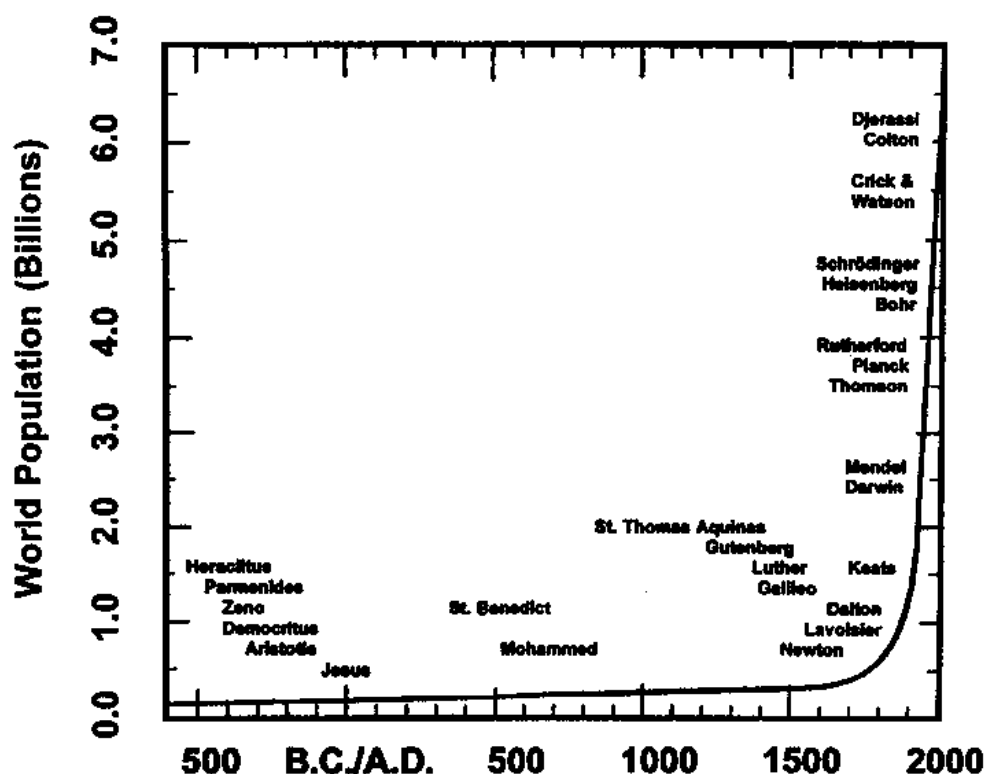


Figure 1. The Fruits of Experimental Science. Population data has been adapted from *Chemistry For Changing Times*.¹¹¹ Historical figures taken from *The Timetables of History*¹⁶¹ have been placed along the plot in chronological order; the actual life span of each historical figure appears within the text.

izers [and] pesticides ... most of the people of the world have abundant food."¹³¹ and "Antiseptics, vaccines, antibiotics, and other medical advances have cut back our death rate enormously"¹⁴ To the extent that they have been quoted, these views are not inconsistent. It should be noted, however, that more extensive quotation would reveal that this plot was originally presented as evidence of the overpopulation "problem" caused by modern technology. While many of the solutions to this problem are inconsistent with Catholic teaching, they are beyond the scope of this work. Moreover, the problem has been addressed elsewhere.¹⁵

Superimposed on the population plot shown in Figure 1 is a chronology¹⁶ of some of the major figures in human history, each positioned roughly at his time in history. This list is certainly not exhaustive, and it is offered as suggestion rather than proof that any of those listed might be responsible for the reported increase in global population. The listing also gives some insight as to who might not be responsible. For example, it would be hard to attribute the global population increase to any religion. Jesus (4 B.C.-30 A.D.), Mohammed (570-632), and Martin Luther (1483-1546) all walked on this earth long before this occurred. Similarly, it would be difficult to attribute the increase to Catholic education; St. Benedict (480-543) got that underway at Monte Cassino in the Sixth century. Also occurring too early to be of immediate consequence to the rising portion of the plot are the invention of printing by Johann Gutenberg (1396-1468), the house arrest of Galileo (1564-1642), and the publication of *Principia Mathematica* by Isaac Newton (1642-1727). The theory of evolution advanced by Charles Darwin (1809-1882) and the identification of the structure of DNA by Francis Crick (1916-) and James Watson (1928-) both came well after the beginning of the population boom.

It is noteworthy that the bend in the population plot coincides directly with the establishment of chemistry as a science (formally defined as intellectual knowledge by means of causes^{17,18}). Those foundations for physics had been laid previously, and those for biology came afterwards. The origins of chemistry as a science is tied to the discovery of the law of conservation of mass by Antoine Laurent Lavoisier (1743-1794) during the final decades of the 18th century and the subsequent proposal by John Dalton (1766-1844) that mass could be conserved in a chemical reaction only if matter is made up of indivisible particles called atoms, coined originally as "atomos" (indivisible) by the Greek philosopher, Democritus (460-370 B.C.). Dalton developed his pro-

posal into a *theory* that provided a *cause* for each of the effects Lavoisier had observed in formulating his *law*. For example, Dalton's atoms were small, uniform, indivisible, and identical for a given element, but different in mass from those of a different element; they combined in fixed ratios to form compounds, and when chemical change took place, mass was conserved because the atoms merely rearranged to form new compounds in which the atoms combined in different proportions.

Theoretical considerations of what we now call chemical change were among the earliest phenomena to be considered by the ancients.¹⁹ The Greek philosophers Heraclitus (544-483 B.C.) and Parmenides (b. 515 B.C.) addressed the phenomenon of change, respectively, either by denying permanence or by denying change. Lacking Lavoisier's experimental evidence, Democritus was able, at best, to fight to a draw with Zeno (b. 490 B.C.), a disciple of Parmenides, whose paradoxes provide ironclad logical arguments that if matter is continuous, change (as represented by movement from point A to point B) is impossible. In the fullness of time, however, the hylomorphic (matter-form) doctrine of Aristotle (384-322 B.C.) won out over all prior contenders as the preferred way to describe change.¹⁰⁰ This doctrine held that change occurs when a new form (act) inhabits unchanging matter (potency). In this case, the fullness of time was roughly 1,500 years when St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) incorporated many of the ideas of Aristotle into his theological treatise *Summa Theologica*.¹¹¹ While it should be noted that treating change as the actualization of a potency is particularly attractive as a model for a metaphysical concept such as the doctrine of transubstantiation, it leaves something to be desired in a model for a physical phenomenon such as combustion. However, so widely accepted were the ideas of Aristotle as advanced by Church teaching via *Summa Theologica* that, at the time of Lavoisier, combustion was viewed as a process by which a substantial form called phlogiston was driven from burning matter so that it could be inhabited by a new form, e.g., ash. According to this theory, the loss of phlogiston could result in either a loss or gain in weight.¹¹² Thus, Lavoisier's discovery of the law of conservation of mass combined with his observation that oxygen was necessary for combustion not only resulted in the demise of the phlogiston theory, but also called into question — at the physical level, at least — the Aristotelian view of change and allowed it to be challenged by the atomic theory of Dalton.

Even though it was supported by experimental evidence, Dalton's atomic theory was not widely accepted

initially because it challenged the prevailing views on the nature of change. Thus, it is probably no coincidence that, more than a decade after Dalton's theory had been promulgated, a prescient John Keats (1799-1821) wrote *Ode on a Grecian Urn* from the perspective of the philosophy of Parmenides so that it could be concluded with the immortal lines

'Beauty is truth, truth beauty,—that is all
Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.'

Dalton's dangerous idea challenged this simplistic, yet classical, equating of truth and beauty because scientific truth lies in the consensus of the practitioners and not in the eye of the beholder. Keats, it seems, did his best to thwart the development of Dalton's theory and the methodology that ultimately grew with it, but the experimental data were too strong to be overcome with verse, and science prevailed.

Throughout the remainder of the 19th century Dalton's theory was tested and refined and eventually became the fundamental *paradigm*¹¹³ of the chemical sciences: matter is made up of atoms, i.e., matter is *quantized*. Early in the 20th century new observations were made that required modification of this paradigm in order to provide a reasonable cause for these observed effects. The experiments of Joseph Thompson (1856-1940) on cathode rays called into question the indivisibility of Dalton's atoms. Those of Ernest Rutherford (1871-1937) dealing with the interaction of matter and radioactivity demonstrated that because atoms are not uniform, most of the atomic mass is concentrated in a nucleus. Each time experimentation revealed new information, the theory was modified to account for the new observation. These new observations and their associated theories then became the prevailing paradigm. In his seminal work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, T.S. Kuhn calls this activity "normal science".¹¹⁴

Just as Dalton's idea revolutionized chemical science, evidence can be offered to show that it also had considerable influence over other sciences and the arts and humanities. The philosophical differences between Dalton's atomism and the Aristotelian notion of change have already been noted. Aspects of the *Summa* such as its teachings on theology as a science [I, 1, 1]¹¹⁵ and the immutability of objective truth [I, 16, 8]¹¹⁶ were also called into question by comparisons with experimental science. Differences such as these must have influenced philosophers who came after the new atomism; is not the utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill¹¹⁷ an example of Dalton's

scientific method at work? And once the human mind begins to ponder things as discrete entities rather than continuities, who can tell where this *zeitgeist* will lead? Comparisons of the visual arts before and after Dalton produce striking results; classical, neoclassical and baroque styles yield to the romantic movement, impressionism and modernism.¹¹⁸ Prior to Dalton painting was directed towards realism. Though Rococo in style, Boucher's *The Toilet of Venus* (1751) exhibits photographic realism. David's Neoclassical works such as *The Death of Socrates* (1787) and *Antoine Lavoisier and his wife* (1788) show firm realistic detail. However, in the Impressionism of Monet's *Red Boats, Argenteuil* (1875) or in the Post-Impressionism of Seurat's *A Sunday on La Grande Jatte*-1884 (1884-86) realism has been replaced by atomic brushwork; each canvas is covered with discrete, systematic flecks of paint to produce the overall impression. Atomization is also exemplified in the Cubism of Picasso's *Portrait of Ambrose Vollard* (1910). In music, the continuous themes found in works such as those of Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750), Franz Joseph Haydn (1732-1809), and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791) are markedly absent from those of Hector Berlioz (1803-1869), Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921), and Franz Liszt (1811-1886). In mathematics continuous functions yielded to the infinite series that now make up every computer algorithm; analog became digital. Sometimes, though, there was resistance to the changes brought about by atomism followed by a regression to the old ways. The experimentally based theory of genetics postulated by Gregor Mendel (1822-1884) went unnoticed before 1900 while the biological community was captivated with the more Aristotelian, i.e., not based in experiment, theory of evolution postulated by Charles Darwin. It is of interest to note that the scientifically more astute Mendel was searching for the "atoms of inheritance" in his work.¹¹⁹

While it began otherwise, the 19th century ended in an atomic milieu. Given a century of normal science as related to chemistry and thereby firmly wedded to the paradigm that all matter is quantized, the physicists of the early 20th century began testing the hypothesis that energy might also be quantized. Max Planck (1858-1947) was able to derive an equation describing the spectrum of blackbody irradiation as a function of temperature based upon the hypothesis that the thermal oscillations of the atoms of the blackbody are restricted to a fixed set of frequencies. Just as the atoms themselves are discrete, the energies that they each may possess were assumed by Planck to also be discrete. Planck's development of this theory as a cause for the effect of

blackbody radiation is regarded as the first application of what physicists call quantum theory. Soon thereafter Niels Bohr (1885-1962) extended quantum theory to the relationship between the bright line emission spectrum that is observed from a discharge tube containing hydrogen vapor and the electronic structure of hydrogen atoms. By assuming a planetary model of the atom in which the hydrogen electron may gain or lose energy in the form of photons as it moves between fixed orbits having quantized energies, Bohr was able to derive equations that would predict the hydrogen spectrum based on the quantized energy differences between the energies of the orbits. When Bohr's planetary model failed to predict the correct electronic structure for atoms other than hydrogen, a much more elegant model to predict the quantized energy levels of the atom was developed independently by Werner Heisenberg (1901-1976) and Erwin Schrödinger (1887-1961). The mathematical methods they employed in their work is known today as quantum mechanics. The quantum mechanical solution to Schrödinger's differential equation also provided a statistical distribution to describe the orbital position of a given electron within the atom. Development of the notion of quantized energy has continued throughout the 20th century, and the theory behind every technological product that we enjoy today is based on our understanding of quantized matter and quantized energy.

Because the prevailing quantum mechanical paradigm for atomic theory rests upon the notion that both matter and energy are quantized, the development of atomic theory from the time of Dalton may be taken, with only minor indulgence from the reader, as the development of quantum mechanics, even though scientists generally restrict this terminology to the work of Heisenberg, Schrödinger and those who came after. Identified in this manner, the development of quantum mechanics is seen as a corrigible process. When additional experimental evidence was obtained, the prevailing paradigm was modified to provide a more reasonable theoretical cause for the observed effects. Thus, Dalton's theory was modified by Thomson; Thomson's was modified by Rutherford; Rutherford's by Bohr; and Bohr's by Schrödinger. In each case, what was perceived as being true in the prior prevailing paradigm was retained in the next. Thus, truth is perfected by this method rather than being discovered. So successful has this process been over nearly two centuries, that the development of quantum mechanics may itself be taken as the paradigm for what non-scientists call the "scientific method."

Some things are essential to the perfection of truth by this method. While the data that describe the effects under theoretical consideration must be as reliable as possible given the instrumentation available, it must be recognized that new technology might make better data available in the future. Absolute honesty in the transmission of these data from one person to another is also required. Finally, the participants in this process must have the freedom to assess these data and to develop and propose any theory that is believed by its proponent to be sustainable by the observations of the remainder of the scientific community. Similarly, members of the community have the freedom to accept or reject any proposed theory *either by retaining the existing paradigm or by adopting the new one*, based upon the perceived agreement with the experimental data. This binary choice in the perfection of the truth guarantees an orthodoxy for the science. If one departs too far from a prevailing paradigm, one runs the risk of losing the respect (and the favorable reviews) of those who support it.

In any "science," where knowledge is obtained through causes, there must be this orthodoxy, a prevailing paradigm against which all new theories must be evaluated. In philosophical science, e.g., quantum mechanics, the prevailing paradigm is based on experimental results and countless acts of faith (belief in atoms, photons, electrons, etc.) offered in reaching the truth of consensus. Once this consensus has been reached, a paradigm shift occurs only when sufficient new data is obtained to challenge prior acts of faith. Data will always overcome verse. In sacred science, however, the truths used to construct the prevailing paradigm have been learned through revelation. Even though revealed by God, they, too, require countless acts of faith,¹²⁰¹ but once this paradigm prevails, only new revelation can bring about a paradigm shift.

Philosophical science also *requires* the exercise of academic freedom by all the participants in the enterprise. This liberty is a condition of employment rather than an endowment from the Creator granted to all persons. Thus, a case can be made that all those within the academy who claim to practice the scientific method enjoy a freedom that is a necessary consequence of the corrigibility of quantum mechanics. However, the extension of this freedom to those who do not have a full appreciation of the scientific method sometimes results in the irresponsible enjoyment of this liberty, and this has caused controversy between science and religion. For example, in his 1907 encyclical "*Pascendi gregis*," Pius X

found it necessary to condemn modernism, a humanistic movement that attempted to reinterpret Church teaching to conform with developments in modern science and philosophy. In defense of science it should be noted that this condemnation preceded the development of quantum mechanics described above and the scientific methods associated with it. Thus, what was condemned in the past is not what is being practiced in the present. Science has come a long way since then. Perhaps the time has come for Science to reconcile its relationship with the Church.

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NATURAL LAW AS A WISDOM TRADITION

by Michael P. Ambrosio

Although critics of natural law argue that its principles are too general, vague and amorphous to be of much use, the natural law tradition has been a source of wisdom for well over 2,000 years. The aim of this paper is to demonstrate its continuing vitality as a wisdom tradition. My first real exposure to the concept of natural law was 35 years ago during a legal philosophy course in my second year at Catholic University Law School. I was immediately attracted to it. I sensed its explanatory power and its unifying force because it enabled me to understand better the connection between law and justice and the ground for legal obligation.

After graduating from law school, I became a staff attorney for the Newark Legal Services Project, an anti-poverty agency that provided legal services to the poor. As a poverty lawyer I was confronted with laws and a legal system that often seemed oppressive to the poor and blind to injustice. Despite mounting evidence of its failures, I nevertheless maintained a faith in the legal system as a means to secure justice. Possessed with a natural law perspective about the nature and purpose of law, I struggled through those early years of law practice believing in the goal of justice. I was sustained by my belief in God as the eternal lawgiver and source of natural law by which human actions and human law are measured and ultimately justified. Happily, I found many kindred spirits who shared my passion for justice and had a willingness to exercise their capacity for reason to discern the good and to do what was right.

During my first years as a member of the Seton Hall Law faculty, I taught a number of courses in which I introduced students to the concept of natural law. The very first course I taught was Equity. For the first two classes I discussed the numerous definitions of equity. I began with Aristotle's definition of equity as "the correction of that which is deficient in the law by reason of its universality." I pointed out that Aristotle held that equity is natural justice, superior to conventional or legal justice. The textbooks available for Equity and other courses I taught during those years including Contracts, Introduction to Law, Trial Practice and Professional Ethics had little more than passing references to legal philosophy or the relationship between law and justice. Rarely did they raise questions about the philosophical implications or the moral dimension of law and law practice. As an unabashed moralist, I felt it was necessary to raise these

larger questions and to challenge students to consider whether the decisions they were reading were consistent with the demands of justice. I increasingly introduced the concept of natural law, particularly Aristotle's definitions of corrective and distributive justice and the Thomistic/Aristotelian conception of the nature and purpose of law. I found that students were receptive to, and, at times, even enthusiastic about natural law doctrine. To my dismay, few of my colleagues shared my enthusiasm for legal philosophy and natural law theory.

I eventually embarked on a more intensive study of the philosophical underpinnings of the law in the hope of transmitting to subsequent classes more of what I came to believe was essential to an understanding of the nature and function of law. During the ensuing years I read widely in the areas of legal, political and moral philosophy from the works of Plato and Aristotle (particularly Aristotle's *Politics*, *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Rhetoric*), to St. Thomas Aquinas' *Treatise on Law* to recent works by Bernard Lonergan, Lon Fuller, John Rawls and John Finnis.

The subject of natural law is complex. To many it is illusory, even mysterious. Perhaps because there are so many different conceptions of natural law that have appeared since the ancient Greeks first coined the term 2,500 years ago, what is central to natural law has become obscured. Although proponents of natural law sometimes disagree as to its source, content and justification, natural law seems to fulfill a need to have some touchstone by which to judge the goodness or badness or even the validity or invalidity of human or positive law. The idea of natural law has been ascribed to the quest for an eternal and immutable justice — a justice that human authority expresses or ought to express but does not create. This justice is conceived as being a higher or ultimate law universally binding on all regardless of time or place. The notion that the "rule of law" binds all morally to obey justified human laws (as opposed to arbitrary commands of a person or group compelling obedience by force or coercion) is an attribute of most natural law theories.

Natural law has a central place in the history of the Western legal tradition. Different theories of natural law reflect different epistemologies and different ideas of nature. The nature of the Roman Cicero is not the nature of St. Thomas Aquinas. To Cicero the source of natural

law was physical nature rather than human nature. His naturalistic view of natural law was derived from Stoic philosophy and based on right reason as reflected in the order of the universe. The Romans conceived of natural law as a technology to find solutions to particular legal problems. Aristotle's model of natural law is based on the concept of equity, his term for natural justice. For Aristotle the human capacity for morals made law necessary. This connection between law and justice is the common thread of natural law theories.

St. Thomas Aquinas presented the first comprehensive statement of natural law in his *Treatise on Law*. Aquinas gave a hierarchical scheme of law in which divine law is supreme, since the whole community of the universe is governed by divine reason. Not all of divine law is intelligible to man. The intelligible part reveals itself through eternal law (which is the incorporation of divine wisdom) and the *lex divina* enacted by God in the Scripture. Principles of eternal law are revealed in natural law, from which are derived human laws. The hierarchy appears as follows:

Eternal Law	
Intelligible to man	Unintelligible to Man
:	:
Natural law	Divine Positive Law
:	(Found in Scripture)
Human Law	

For many the concept of natural law is tied to the existence of God. This theological conception of natural law appeared in the 11th to the 13th century Italy. A group of lawyers who were also philosophers and theologians sought the deeper meaning of the language and concepts they encountered. They studied rediscovered works of Aristotle and the texts of the Roman law that had been lost for centuries. They were called Glossators because they glossed (wrote interpretative notes in the margins) of Justinian's Code. These Glossators ultimately concluded that the source of law was God. They redefined the concept of natural law as an expression of equity and justice. Inerius, perhaps the most influential Glossator, posited that equity is nothing else but God, that justice is God's will, and that equity and justice are different aspects of the same thing. Justice was thought to be the concrete extension of equity into the real world in the same way that a building is a concrete expression of the plan in the mind of an architect.

In the 16th and early 17th century a number of other natural law theories appeared, like those of Catholic theologians Gabriel Vasquez and Francisco Suarez, equating natural law with the will of God. Protestant theologians including Martin Luther also conceived of natural law as the will of God and, as such, not discoverable through reason. Grotius and Pufendorf posited secular natural law theories quite similar to the Stoic idea of right reason reflected in the order of the universe.

In the 17th and 18th century, natural law theories took the form of political theories based on a hypothetical social contract. These social contract theories, like those of Locke and Rousseau, were in reality theories of natural rights rather than natural law. Natural rights refer to inherent rights or moral claims of individuals that are universal and inalienable. Natural law refers to principles from which to discern the duties owed to others and the basis for the norms that guide human choice so as to protect the liberty defined by natural rights. Natural law is a broader concept than natural rights but the two are not incompatible. On the contrary, as John Finnis points out, natural rights are synonymous with natural law and rights analysis provides a helpful reference point for discerning the scope of moral duties and the application of moral principles.

When the United States was founded in the latter part of the 18th century, the idea central to natural law philosophy — that law is intimately and indissolubly connected with morality — was accepted as a given by moral, political and legal philosophers. However there were those who made extravagant claims and invoked natural law to justify unjust laws. In reaction to this, John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham and John Austin encouraged the study of law as a social fact rather than as a moral norm. Their views became known as legal positivism because they advocated a narrow definition of law as the aggregate of positive or human laws that are part of a legal system. In contrast to proponents of natural law, legal positivists contend that the science of law should be studied as an autonomous discipline separate and distinct from morals. Whereas natural law doctrine is based on the premise that the essence of law is reason and its purpose to secure justice, according to legal positivism the essence of law is will (the will of the political sovereign) and its purpose is to achieve order. During the latter half of the 19th century and throughout the 20th century various forms of legal positivism, with a central tenet that law and morality are separate and distinct spheres, were embraced by American lawyers. Legal positivism has been the dominant influence on Ameri-

can lawyers and American legal education throughout the 20th century. Even at Catholic law schools, natural law has been viewed with suspicion, despite the fact that the Catholic Church has been the chief proponent and defender of natural law since the Middle Ages.

Through periods of decline and resurgence, the natural law tradition has had a remarkable resiliency. We are currently in a period in which there is a revival of interest in natural law. Some legal scholars attribute this latest resurgence of natural law as a response to the shocking revelations of the genocide of the Jewish people that took place under the laws of Nazi Germany. They question whether the separation of law and morals advocated by legal positivism was in part responsible for what happened.

In this century, new formulations of natural law have emerged viewing natural law as objectively given value, as morals, as deontology, as related to sociology, as based on anthropology, as ethical jurisprudence and as the inner morality of law. What follows is a brief account of the views of 20th century natural law thinkers who were largely responsible for the current resurgence of interest in natural law.

John Courtney Murray, the influential Jesuit theologian and foremost American proponent of natural law sought to present natural law in a way that was coherent and attractive to the American people. He began by clearly establishing that the theory of natural law was not a "Catholic" theory but rather a valid description of the moral experience of all humankind:

It is sometimes said that one cannot accept the doctrine of natural law unless one has accepted its "Roman Catholic presuppositions." This, of course is quite wrong. Its only presupposition is threefold: that man is intelligent; that reality is intelligible; and that reality, as grasped by the intelligence imposes on the will the obligation that it be obeyed in its demand for actions or abstention. Even these statements are not presuppositions since they are susceptible of verification.

To underscore its universal appeal, Murray referred to natural law as "the tradition of reason" or the "tradition of civility" and as "the acquisitions of the human mind and spirit reflecting on the meaning of human life as it has historically developed." He viewed it as the *philosophia perennis* of human heritage rather than the accomplishment of a particular culture.

In 1954 in a famous debate in the pages of the *Harvard Law Review*, Harvard Professors Lon Fuller and H.L.A. Hart debated the relationship between law and morals. Fuller, a proponent of natural law, argued that what law is and what law ought to be cannot be separated. He maintained that fact (the is) and values (the ought) merge in law in the process of interpretation. Fuller presents eight principles of what he calls the inner morality of law. These principles are not conceived as maxims of substantive natural law in the sense of ideals inspiring a society, but rather as a procedural natural law.

Hart, a leading positivist, countered that only confusion results from failing to separate facts and values. He insisted that what the law is, is a separate and distinct question from what the law ought to be. Hart, nevertheless, conceded that there is a minimum content of natural law in every legal system. Hart writes:

In considering the simple truisms which we set forth here, and their connection with law and morals, it is important to observe that in each case the facts mentioned afford a reason why, given survival as an aim, law and morals should include a specific content. The general form of the argument is simply that without such a content laws and morals could not forward the minimum purpose of survival men have in associating with each other.

The debate about the relationship between law and morals between proponents of natural law and legal positivism has lost its intensity. Contemporary natural law thinkers accept the value of legal positivism as a descriptive analysis of law and legal system while maintaining that natural law is essential for a moral appraisal and moral justification of human or positive law.

Among the many additions to the natural law tradition in recent decades John Rawls' *A Theory of Justice: Justice as Fairness* and John Finnis' *Natural Law and Natural Rights* may have had the greatest impact. Each in their own way has stimulated thought about the nature of human rationality and the human capacity to discover objective moral principles as a guide to actions. One measure of the influence a thinker has is the extent to which others feel compelled to respond to his theory. On this account, John Rawls is perhaps the most influential political philosopher of the 20th century.

Rawls' theory of justice is a political theory based on the premise, common to natural law theories, that humans are free, rational and social beings. His theory is a defense of classical political liberalism in that it stresses

the importance of individual liberty. It is also Kantian in that it emphasizes the existence of objective principles of rationality. He avoids the obscurities of Kant's "transcendental idealism," however, by relying on the "canons of a reasonable empiricism." Rawls posits that Kantian concerns for equality and autonomy can be satisfied by a hypothetical social contract in which all persons decide, as free and rational beings from positions of equality, the principles through which basic rights and duties are assigned and division of social benefits are determined. Rawls sets forth principles of justice which he asserts would be chosen as a hypothetical social contract by rational persons in the original position with reflective equilibrium and a veil of ignorance as to their particular circumstances in the society to be formed. The two principles of justice are easily stated but quite complex in their application. They are first: a principle requiring an equal right to liberty; and second, (the difference principle), a principle allowing social and economic inequalities only when they benefit the least advantaged individual and stem from opportunities that are fairly open to all.

Rawls is a leader in the rebellion against the dominating influence of utilitarianism. He rejects as senseless and irrational the utilitarian calculus of the greatest good for the greatest number. But like most Kantian liberals and utilitarians, he argues that the right is prior to the good and that the state should remain, as much as possible, neutral to declaring and establishing precepts of the good life.

Whereas Rawls presents a novel formulation of natural law, Finnis has made a careful restatement of the classical Thomistic/Aristotelian theory of natural law. Finnis' achievement is no less impressive, especially in view of the fact that more than one generation of thinkers had dismissed the Thomistic/Aristotelian account of natural law as an ancient fallacy kept alive only as the theological dogmatics of an authoritarian church. What is so remarkable about Finnis' theory is that it incorporates much of the learning of the modern critics of natural law while clarifying and expanding the basic elements of the classical Thomistic/Aristotelian theory of natural law.

In the first two chapters of *Natural Law and Natural Rights*, Finnis traces the history of the natural law tradition and addresses the many objections that have been raised by philosophers from competing schools of thought. Finnis' work reflects not only the wisdom of the natural law tradition but it also manifests why natural law is a wisdom tradition. Much like Aristotle, Finnis directs his argument to the sceptic. In the classical tradition of

natural law theorizing, Finnis grounds his theory on the premise that there are self-evident, basic, universal values or goods that are the only legitimate ends for human beings. In other words, in Finnis' theory the good is prior to the right. The good of practical reason is the means to achieve the other basic goods. Finnis posits that there are seven equally fundamental goods that are necessary for human flourishing: life, knowledge, friendship, play, art, religion and practical reasonableness. These basic goods are irreducible in the sense that they constitute the fundamental categories of human good that consist of many particular concrete acts. They are non-commensurable because each is equally important and, as such, no one can be ignored if a human being is to flourish.

Critics of Finnis' theory reject his claim that the basic goods are not derived or demonstrable but are self-evident to anyone with the requisite capacity for rationality. Herein lies a major difficulty with Finnis' theory and other natural law theories. Appeals to self-evidence are dismissed by opponents of natural law who argue among other things that insight, intuition and reason are untenable starting premises. They assert that natural law has no criterion for truth other than faith and that, in the end, it is nothing more than disguised religion. Finnis answers this criticism as follows:

[I]n every field there is and must be, at some point or points an end to derivation and inference. At that point or points, we find ourselves in face of the self-evident, which makes possible all subsequent inferences in that field.

Finnis also points out that studies of cultural anthropologists who set out to prove the absence of universal values found that, to the contrary, there are values that appear to be universally recognized. He cites, among other examples, the evidence that every society studied gave expression to the value of life by punishing unjustified killing and gave recognition to the value of knowledge by transmitting knowledge to the young.

The core of Finnis' theory is his definition of practical reasonableness. Finnis' nine principles of practical reason are principles of practical wisdom or intermediate principles of natural law derived from the first principle that the good is to be pursued and evil avoided. Undemonstrable and self-evident as are the basic goods, the principles provide a framework for deciding appropriate means to instantiate the basic goods. The nine requirements of practical reasonableness are all interrelated aspects of the process of following one's conscience.

Finnis' introduction to his principles of practical reasonableness is nothing short of a call to wisdom so characteristic of the natural law tradition. He writes:

Each of these requirements concerns what one must do, or think, or be if one is to participate in the basic value of practical reasonableness. Someone who lives up to these requirements is thus Aristotle's *phronimos* [one with practical wisdom]; he has Aquinas's *prudencia* [prudence]; they are requirements of reasonableness or practical wisdom, and to fail to live up to them is irrational. But, secondly, reasonableness both is a basic aspect of human well-being and *concerns* one's participation in all (other) basic aspects of human well being. Hence its requirements concern fullness of well-being in the circumstances of his lifetime. So someone who lives up to these requirements is also Aristotle's *spoudaios* (mature man); his life is *eu zen* (well living) and, unless circumstances are quite against him, we can say that he has Aristotle's *eudaimonia* (the inclusive all-around flourishing or well-being — not safely translated as 'happiness'). But, thirdly, the basic forms of good are opportunities of *being*; the more fully a man participates in them the more he is what he can be. And for this state of being fully what one can be, Aristotle appropriated the word *physis*, which was translated into Latin as *natura*. So Aquinas will say that these requirements are requirements not only of reason and of goodness, but also (by entailment) of (human) nature.

Natural law theorizing is completely at odds with the claims of post modernists that all knowledge is local and that truth is at best partial and subjective. Every culture has its own definition of rationality and justice that stems

from its response to particular conditions and problems. At the core of the natural law tradition, however, is the insistence that human reason is capable of discerning not only the proper ends for human beings (basic universal human goods), but the appropriate means to achieve those ends. Aquinas asserted that the first principles of natural law and the conclusions that follow from them (secondary principles) are certain and immutable truth. He counseled, however, that human beings can have faulty perceptions of that truth. Aquinas also recognized that human or positive law (tertiary principles of natural law) were subject to change and that the natural law is subject to addition. Finnis not only adopts Aquinas' description of the three kinds of natural law principles but posits, as did Aquinas, that through the exercise of practical reason human beings share in the task of divine providence by their participation in the basic goods which constitute acts of creation.

CONCLUSION

The natural law tradition is a legacy of thought which those of us who are its heirs have a responsibility to understand, to clarify, to explore more fully, and to develop and enrich. It is especially important for those of us who are part of Catholic higher education to understand this intellectual heritage that has been variously described as higher law, the tradition of reason or natural law as a source of wisdom. A sound natural law theory provides a framework for moral analysis to evaluate and justify individual actions and the actions of those responsible for the care of the community. The natural law tradition is not only a source of moral absolutes but a much needed antidote to the narrow instrumental rationality, moral relativism and consequentialism that deflect attention from ethical questions, universal values and the requirements of justice.

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Catholic Social Teaching

WHERE COULD ACADEMIC FREEDOM BE HEALTHIEST? THE CASE FOR CATHOLIC COLLEGES

by David R. Foster

American colleges prize academic freedom. Their history recounts a progressive liberation from their Church mothers. For much of their history, they believed academic freedom incompatible with Catholic higher education. Yet, there is ample evidence that American colleges are being poisoned by freedom untempered by responsibility. Ironically, academic freedom can now be its healthiest in those Catholic schools where it seemed impossible to the American Academy.

This essay stems from a week of faculty reflection at Seton Hall University on maintaining the Catholic character of our school. Thus, it focuses on Catholic colleges and universities (hereafter simply "colleges") but the advantages mentioned would be true for all Christian schools, and I happily include them in my advocacy of a religious dimension in education.

George Marsden's scholarship has done a service for everyone who considers the future of Catholic higher education. Marsden is a Presbyterian, a historian, a faculty member for some years at Calvin College, and now a faculty member at Notre Dame. In his book, *The Soul of the American University: From Protestant Establishment to Established Nonbelief*,^[1] Marsden gives the history of schools that started with strong Christian roots such as Northwestern, Duke, Boston University, Syracuse, Vanderbilt and the University of Southern California, but that now have only a trace of their Christian origins. It is instructive to read the arguments made by faculty members in the early half of this century for more open, more inclusive, and less coercive school policies. These arguments were all made in the name of a more Christian school. They led, however, to the rapid decline in the distinctly Christian character of the schools.

In his next book, *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship*,^[2] Marsden makes the case for the inclusion of Christian scholars in mainstream universities. First, Marsden documents the unique bias that discourages scholars from bringing a Christian perspective to their work. Second, Marsden makes a distinction in response to the common question "how can there be a distinctly Christian physics or a Christian sociology?" The distinction is between the tools proper to a discipline and the fundamental presuppositions that each discipline makes. There is nothing distinctly Christian about the tools proper to a discipline; e.g., there is not a distinctively

Christian way to measure the distance between stars or to take sociological statistics. There are, however, fundamental presuppositions made by every discipline, which affect the conclusions, some of which are characteristically Christian. For example, if a physicist excludes the possibility of intentional creation of the universe, then he is closed to all explanations that require intentional action. Likewise, if a sociologist excludes the possibility of a spiritual soul as part of the human person, then he has excluded a promising explanation for why we act as we do. The Christian perspective is not narrower. It is characteristically open to a wider range of possibilities, because while the Christian does not exclude natural mechanisms such as natural selection, neither does he or she exclude the possibility of teleology in nature nor self-determination by the human person.

In his essay "What can Catholic University's learn from Protestants' examples?"^[3] Marsden points out that Catholic universities are following the same road to secularization traveled by their Protestant counterparts earlier in this century. In order not to suffer a similar fate, Marsden recommends that Catholic schools build a tradition of Catholic scholarship and actively recruit faculty who are either Catholic or who share the mission of the college; a majority of the faculty should be both.

What Marsden's book does not do (and the point of this essay) is to make the case for the advantage that the Catholic/Christian colleges have in pursuit of knowledge. The thesis of this essay is that the Catholic college's ability to combine academic freedom with academic responsibility makes it more effective in teaching and seeking knowledge.

Being honest about academic freedom

Before discussing academic responsibility, it must be stated clearly that Catholic colleges need to practice robust academic freedom and should even err on the side of permissiveness. Catholic colleges need to articulate a clear and credible vision of responsible academic freedom.

The claim of this essay is that Catholic colleges can be the healthiest centers of academic freedom, not that they are. The balance of freedom and responsibility is not an easy balance to keep. Catholic schools will have

to be able to admit mistakes and learn from them. Those Catholic schools trying hardest to be Catholic will have to make special efforts not to do so at the expense of academic freedom.

The principle of academic freedom has won the day in American colleges, and despite the fact that nowadays it is often abused, it is a battle well won. George Marsden concludes from his study of American universities that there were valid reasons why academic reformers sought to lessen the influence of the Churches upon the schools.

The Apostolic Constitution, *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, is a landmark in the Church's effort to win back the heart of its schools. It is having a steadily increasing salutary impact as it is read and digested. *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* affirms in three places the need for academic freedom,¹⁴ but never with much force. To my mind, a more forceful statement for academic freedom¹⁵ and a clearer statement of what its practice entails would improve the document.

A growing recognition of the dignity of each individual has been one of the bright spots in modern thought. The human person has a natural desire to know the truth about things. In seeking to find the truth the individual must have the freedom to speculate and to make mistakes. Intellectually the Catholic Church has a long and clear commitment to the harmony between reason and faith; a belief that the faith has nothing to fear from reason.¹⁶ But only more recently has the Church unambiguously stated that while "error has no rights" that a person, even when in error, does have rights.

It is true that the practice of the Church has not been as clear. In this century there are prominent examples of good scholars who have been silenced by the Church, only to later be vindicated; e.g., Henri De Lubac, Jean Danielou, John Courtney-Murray. The famous examples are all prior to Vatican II. The few notorious cases of disciplinary actions since Vatican II are not to my mind examples of excess in defense of the faith. Only time will tell if certain positions are vindicated.

It is incumbent upon those who champion the role of Catholic colleges to describe in a convincing way how academic freedom can be responsibly practiced in the classroom, in the laboratory, and in the common life of the school.

The parable of the wheat and tares (Matt 13:24-30) provides an appropriate meditation for this situation. When I said earlier that Catholic schools should practice a robust academic freedom and even err on the side of permissiveness, I was thinking of this parable. I believe we live in a world where the enemy (the Father of lies) has already been at work and sown his bad seed. The

wise Master counsels his servants not to try to pull up the tares lest they destroy the wheat in the process. The need for academic freedom stems from both the rights of the individual, and the danger that efforts to root out every error would do more harm than good.

Academic Responsibility Provides Needed Balance

Academic freedom needs academic responsibility to be healthy. Academic responsibility needs a set of principles to work from. That set of principles has grown very slim at most public and private colleges, so that even the most principled president has little to work with. Catholic schools on the other hand have the possibility of acting on a more complete set of principles.

Academic freedom's need for academic responsibility is a particular instance of the need for balance between freedom and responsibility, which is true for individuals, for societies, and analogously for nature. Plato observed in *The Republic*¹⁷ that the life of the tyrant, which seems to realize complete freedom, turns out to be self-imposed slavery. Freedom and responsibility are complementary principles that function properly only in tandem. Free citizens must respect the rights of their fellow citizens to remain free. The freedom to use common property or even personal property does not extend to abuses that poison the environment. Analogously, in nature a balance of rest and exercise is needed for a healthy body. The freedom to fly comes only after attention to the laws of aerodynamics. Likewise, a scholar deserves the freedom to seek the truth, but at the same time needs to act responsibly regarding the common good.

Colleges have suffered a greater loss of moral principles than society in general because the loss has come from the intellectual seduction of such philosophies as materialism, positivism and postmodernism. With the exclusion of religion from public life (and campus life) and the postmodern denial that anything is true in any meaningful sense, colleges have lost the ability to fully educate students or develop community among scholars.

This is not to say our society is without moral principles; indeed real advances have been made in the general condemnations of racism, of injustice towards women, and of exclusion of the handicapped. But in the face of extreme relativism pushed further by the postmodern critique, the list of common moral principles has become exceedingly short. There has been a particular loss of common principles that would allow us to defend the importance of marriage and family. The result is that the only moral advice that colleges feel

qualified to give is not moral but medical: "don't smoke and use condoms." Our moral principles are increasingly vestigial and society no longer feels capable of defending even those that seemed most clear.

American colleges are rightly proud of their progress in many academic fields, and they rightly protect their academic freedom. But they are poisoning themselves by failing to use freedom responsibly. Their lack of ability to make the simplest distinctions between the academically healthy and the harmful have led to increasingly bizarre activities in our universities. For example, Princeton University recently hired Peter Singer, a utilitarian philosopher, to a chair of bioethics. Singer is famous for his denial that there is a fundamental difference between human beings and other animals. Singer writes:

We should reject the doctrine that places the lives of members of our species above the lives of members of other species. Some members of other species are persons: some members of our species are not. No objective assessment can support the view that it is always worse to kill members of our species who are not persons than members of other species who are.¹⁸

Thus Singer's writings have become bible for animal rights activists, teaching that some animals are persons. Conversely his writings encourage not only abortion and euthanasia but also justify infanticide on the basis that infants are not persons. Singer's inability to distinguish between man and other animals makes him a poor choice to teach bioethics.

Another example of this sad state of affairs is that dorms no longer have rules that support students who would like to resist promiscuous behavior. The extreme relativism has caused campus administrators to lose all

moral compass that would allow them to uphold the natural link between sexual intimacy and marriage.

Furthermore, the loss of moral compass makes it increasingly difficult for good and reasonable faculty to say no to lethal experimentation on unborn children, the cloning of human beings to provide spare children, or the genetic crossing of man and beast to provide spare parts.

In Sum

The advantage that Catholic (and Christian) schools have is a more complete set of moral principles by which to guide their community of learners. If these schools will act upon their convictions while practicing a robust academic freedom they will realize three advantages: an integral education for their students, a healthier happier common life, and a more productive return from scholarly research.

The greater depth and breadth of common moral principles of the Christian schools give them an ability to guide (but not stifle) research, deliver a more humane education, and provide some unity to complement the school's diversity. Despite our current sensitivity to the need for diversity, unity is the more difficult virtue to achieve. It is impossible for colleges or society to maintain unity without some common moral principles. Colleges have rightly recognized the richness of a diverse faculty and student body, but some forget that the ultimate reason for celebrating our diversity is to achieve some type of unity.

If Catholic colleges flourish as centers of academic freedom and responsibility, they would be an important part of the Catholic Moment – that time when the Catholic Community, of all society's institutions, is best able to provide the moral leadership for our future.

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SOCIAL JUSTICE, CATHOLIC SCHOOLS AND TEACHER EDUCATION

by Richard Ognibene

Let me begin this essay with a confession. In the early 1970s I was an unknowing participant in a movement that changed Catholic higher education both positively and negatively. After the mid-1950s when John Tracy Ellis' famous article criticized the low quality of American Catholic intellectual life and urged the abandonment of a ghetto mentality in favor of "mingling" with non-Catholic colleagues, Catholic colleges began the process of hiring faculty with diminished concern for their religious convictions but a heightened attention to their scholarly potential.⁽¹⁾ My closest colleagues in my first position at a Catholic college were two religious studies professors, one of whom was from The University of Chicago Divinity School and a second who held degrees from a Lutheran Seminary and Yale Divinity School. In the early 1970s, influenced by the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, such hiring decisions seemed one of the logical ways a Catholic institution could more effectively engage with the thinking of the modern world. As a new assistant professor and a Catholic, this view appeared correct to me then and still does.

In the long run, what was lost in this process both for me and the two subsequent Catholic institutions for which I have worked, was the disposition to include a Catholic perspective in the professional academic work that is our main activity. As a teacher educator who often held academic leadership roles, I was caught up in matters such as competency based curriculum development, field based clinical training, accreditation standards and other important professional issues. Even in teaching my educational foundations courses, where it would have been appropriate, I felt no urgency or institutional encouragement to include topics relevant to the philosophy or history of Catholic education, or issues related to Catholic educational institutions. Ironically, I had both the academic training and the personal experience that would have made that easy to do.

The confession over, I turn now to my 1990s penance, and describe its positive and continuing effects on my professional life. I redeveloped an academic interest in Catholic schools because several social science analyses of these institutions began to reveal a new and exciting aspect of their work. For more than 20 years, beginning in the mid-1960s, Catholic school stories typically dealt with declining enrollments, school closings,

and the consequences of the reduction in religious faculty and their replacement by lay teachers and principals. By the later 1980s, however, the research of James Coleman and others on the superior academic achievement of Catholic school students became the more dominant story, one that captured wide attention, including mine.⁽²⁾ Especially significant were the data indicating that minority students in Catholic schools substantially reduced the achievement gap between them and non-minority students, an accomplishment not generally found in public schools. While there was an intense methodological debate over these findings in academic circles, the popular press had a simpler explanation: Catholic schools do a better job, even among students who elsewhere are labeled "at risk." This new message helped to stabilize Catholic school enrollments and even produce modest increases since 1992. It also gave life to the school choice movement and provided the inspiration for the growing number of private voucher programs created by philanthropic groups in recent years.

The most significant book on these issues is *Catholic Schools and the Common Good* by Anthony Bryk, Valerie Lee and Peter Holland.⁽³⁾ Since its publication in 1993, this book, its authors, or the numerous derivative articles and chapters they subsequently produced are widely cited in scholarly and popular media accounts of Catholic school successes. Their insightful conclusions are based on further analysis of data used by Coleman in the 1980s, supplemented by field observations in six high schools in seven dioceses across the country. With clarity and confidence, Bryk, et al. identify the primary characteristics of Catholic secondary schools responsible for the success of those schools. Those characteristics are: (1) a constrained academic structure, that is, a narrower, more focused curriculum; (2) communally organized schools operating within decentralized educational systems; and, (3) a shared commitment to an inspirational ideology oriented toward the achievement of social justice in our multicultural society. The authors argue that these findings are worthy of study by those interested in educational reform, that embedded in the story of Catholic school successes are "lessons" that may yield information about how to improve public schools. I agree, and the irony of my earlier neglect of Catholic education is that I have formulated a research agenda derived from

the issues raised in the Bryk text. It is the topic that now most engages me, a circumstance that earlier I kiddingly called my "penance."

One aspect of contemporary Catholic schools that especially interests me is that the academic accomplishments of students in many of these schools in urban areas is in itself an example of social justice. As Charles Morris aptly notes in his recent book, *American Catholic*, "The Church's lingering presence as an educational haven for aspiring children in poor city neighborhoods is still the crown jewel of Catholic social endeavor."¹⁴ Within these schools, and in their suburban counterparts, specific instruction, many school activities, and the shared values of most adults who work there are unambiguously oriented toward the achievement of social justice goals.¹⁵ Catholic schools are places where the views expressed in the Church's social justice documents of the last 40 years are continually on display. If, as the Synod of Bishops declared in 1971, a "Christian works out his (or her) salvation by deeds of justice," then the work of a Christian school must be consonant with the principles of human dignity and solidarity and the commitment to the common good achieved through a society oriented to fairness, equality and the opportunity for all persons to fully participate in every human activity. As David Hollenbeck, S. J., has written, "Catholic thought has long held that the common good is the overarching end to be pursued in social and cultural life. [T]he success or failure of a society to realize its common good will be largely dependent on its educational endeavors."¹⁶

The social justice orientation of Catholic schools is not an accident. Following the justice emphasis in the Second Vatican Council document *Gaudium et Spes* (1965), a 1971 Synod of Bishops in Rome developed a related document entitled *Justice in the World* that focused even more attention on justice issues. According to the bishops, justice is a fundamental work of the Church:

Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.¹⁷

In that spirit, in 1972, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in the United States issued a pastoral message on Catholic education, *To Teach As Jesus Did*, that redefined the mission of Catholic schools. The educational efforts of the Church, the bishops wrote, "must encompass

the twin purposes of personal sanctification and social reform in light of Christian values." This mission would be fulfilled as schools found effective ways to (1) proclaim God's message; (2) develop community; and (3) give service. "Community is at the heart of Christian education," the document states, "not simply as a concept to be taught but as a reality to be lived." The bishops' message declared that the "Christian educational ministry includes as a dimension of high importance the education of our own people to the imperatives of justice . . ."

No human joy, no human sorrow is a matter of indifference to the community established by Jesus. In today's world, this requires that the Christian community be involved in seeking solutions to a host of common problems . . . which undermine community within and among nations. Christians render such service by prayer and worship and also by direct participation in the cause of social reform.¹⁸

These documents, *Justice in the World* and *To Teach As Jesus Did*, provide the basis for a culture that supports a social justice curriculum and pedagogy in Catholic schools along with social action projects that are common in those schools. The National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) took the lead in helping to create that culture in the 1970s with a massive curriculum development project, *Seeking a Just Society*, published in 1978 and disseminated throughout the Catholic system. Starting in 1980, the NCEA's journal, *Momentum*, began and continues to publish a "Justice and Peace Education" column in every issue along with frequent articles and periodic theme issues related to Catholic social teaching and education.¹⁹

To develop an interest in Catholic schools is to become aware of the social education and social action activities that occupy an important place in those schools. Here are a few examples. In Minnesota, students at St. Bernard's Grade School in St. Paul organized activities for and with senior citizens; their peers at St. John Vianney School wrote a "Proclamation for Social Justice" asking for increased support for the poor that was then presented to the city's top public officials.²⁰ In New Jersey, the Archdiocese of Newark, in conjunction with a garment worker's union and federal and state labor departments, supplies learning modules that deal with labor issues and the injustice of sweatshops to Catholic schools with grades seven through twelve.²¹ In the city of Newark, Queen of the Angels School organized a comprehensive conflict resolution program for students, faculty, and

parents in an effort to promote nonviolence in the school and the community.¹¹² In upstate New York, when tornadoes recently devastated several small communities north of Albany, an ongoing student organization at Saratoga Central Catholic High School called Project Rainbow quickly mobilized to go to those communities to help with the cleanup and recovery. Project Rainbow's primary mission is to respond to community situations in which helping hands are needed.¹¹³

Sad to say, social justice issues and a school based press for social education and social action have not been near the top of America's public education agenda. Eloquent secular spokespersons regarding these matters like Nel Noddings and Peter McClaren are generally applauded, but their message is rarely translated into action. The bland yet often controversial character education movement found in some public schools is a weak substitute for the principle of human dignity that is the basis for social justice notions rooted in the prophetic tradition and in the life and teaching of Jesus.

In a nation publicly committed to equal opportunity, the "savage inequalities" between poor urban schools and elite suburban ones constitutes political and social hypocrisy and an affront to the Judeo-Christian tradition we claim to value. From a social justice perspective, the 28-year legal and political battle in New Jersey to determine how to best assist poor schools was indefensible. Ironically, Catholic schools that were attacked for most of their history as promoting social separatism, are now seen by many as the best hope for poor children to achieve the opportunity for economic and personal integration into the larger society. The contemporary school choice movement, increasingly supported by poor and minority parents, is an act of faith that non-public schools, including Catholic schools as a leading example, can be the vehicle by which these parents achieve justice for their children. This development points to a potentially major shift in America's public institutional life, and serves as a reminder that Catholicism has been and remains a significant public force in our nation's history.¹¹⁴

My interest in these matters is what drew me to the Catholic Studies Faculty Development Seminar. The call for participation in that seminar stated that "another issue that should make it to the table is the matter of education and justice [and] educating for justice." A question the seminar helped me to formulate was in what ways do teacher education programs in Catholic institutions use the social teachings of the Church to strengthen their training programs? Since Catholic schools are regularly used for field placements and hire our graduates, a

related question is do we take advantage of the social justice emphasis of contemporary Catholic education to add meaningful dimensions to our professional education programs?

My experience suggests negative responses to both questions. To test this assumption, I examined elementary and secondary teacher education programs described in the current catalogs of 15 Catholic colleges in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania. Although I recognize the serious limitations of information obtained from catalogs, I do believe I was able to get a face value answer to the following question: Does the college mission statement reflect the social teachings of the Church, and, if yes, do goal statements and program components in the Education Department also reflect that perspective? I found that the mission statements of nine of the fifteen institutions did reflect the Church's social teaching but only in four of those nine were similar views expressed in Education Department goal statements. Of those four, only one contained an explicit education program requirement designed to meet the social service commitment of the department and the university. While this finding was disappointing it was not surprising. Recent surveys by the National Center for Research on Teaching and Learning at Michigan State University and by the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education indicate that the vast majority of education programs fail to critically and effectively prepare pre-service teachers to work in ethnically, racially, and culturally diverse settings.¹¹⁵ If social justice and multicultural diversity issues are absent or ineffectively dealt with in teacher education programs in Catholic and secular colleges, this finding suggests that these programs give greater weight to the technical competence central to professional training but insufficient attention to the moral purposes of education that prospective teachers should understand, experience and value.

This circumstance can be remedied and, happily, I have already had preliminary conversations with some departmental colleagues who are interested in strengthening our own programs in regard to these issues. Their interest surfaced, in part, because of their recent and intended future involvement in the service learning initiative underway at Seton Hall. Service learning, I believe, is a nearly perfect vehicle for introducing social justice theory and practice into professional education training programs. Moreover, I think that the best place to do so is in the first course in both the elementary and secondary programs. Throughout the nation, tremendous variation exists among first course offerings in teacher

education programs. The introduction of a new element in such a course would not violate traditions that guide the sequencing of components and professional field placements that typically govern the rest of the program. In addition, themes introduced in a first course can be revisited in later parts of the program as appropriate.

This essay is not the place to offer a detailed explanation of service learning or to examine related pedagogical and evaluation issues or procedural concerns regarding student placement in appropriate service sites. What I will do instead is suggest how service learning can address the larger issues noted earlier in conjunction with Catholic social teaching and the motivation that teaching inspires for informed social action.

Experts on service learning state that the first step in courses with service learning components is the preparation of students to ensure that they have sufficient knowledge and skill to participate thoughtfully and effectively at the service site. Such preparation promotes active learning at the site, and enhances student reflection about the experience while it is occurring and afterward.¹¹⁶ Catholic social teaching can be part of the instructional preparation stage in the course I envision because that teaching is conceptually related to ideas found in provocative and socially oriented works that influenced American educational thinking in the first half of the 20th century like John Dewey's *The School and Society* and George S. Counts' *Dare the School Build a New Social Order?* Moreover, in recent times, an approach to education called Critical Theory or Critical Pedagogy has gained favor among those in education committed to reforming schools and society in ways that are favorable to oppressed and marginalized members of our society. To read the works of secular critical educational theorists is like reading the 1986 Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter *Economic Justice For All* without the biblical references.¹¹⁷ The former insists that educators exercise a "preferential option for the poor" while the latter work (and other Church documents) remind all Christians of that obligation.

John Haughey, S.J., in an article on identity issues in Catholic higher educational institutions, posed several insightful questions for faculty in such institutions, includ-

ing the following: "Does the subject matter you treat deal with issues that the Church's tradition has addressed? If so, would it be appropriate to advert to the tradition?"¹¹⁸ There is no escaping the conclusion that the Church's social teachings are congruent with theories held dear by a small but influential group of Americans who seek to reshape public education. Having students in an introductory education course read from the works of progressives like Dewey and Counts, and contemporaries like Jonathan Kozol, Sonia Nieto, Michael Apple and Gloria Ladson-Billings, as well as selected Catholic social documents, would likely create an enthusiasm for service to children and adults who are poor and excluded from society's mainstream. This or a similar combination of readings is not outlandish at all. Paulo Freire, the internationally known Brazilian educator who died in 1997, contributed substantially to the development of both liberation theology and critical educational theory. Not insignificantly, after his long exile from Brazil, during which time he traveled the world developing literacy programs for the poor, Freire returned home to spend much of the remainder of his life teaching at the Catholic University of Sao Paulo.¹¹⁹

The essence of what I have written here is that prospective teachers should develop an understanding of the moral purposes of education, and that knowledge of Catholic social teaching can promote that outcome. I have suggested a reorganized introductory education course with a service learning component as a means to achieve that end. Service learning proponents advance arguments I find irresistible: that service learning helps students develop "the ability to both care passionately about something and think rationally about it at the same time." Service learning, we are told, helps "to move students . . . from acts of charity to (a) commitment to social justice."¹²⁰ These are outcomes that are appropriate for any teacher education program, and, I would argue, especially those situated in a Catholic college or university. As the Australian sociologist R. W. Connell said so wisely: "The issue of social justice is not an add-on. It is fundamental to what good education is about."¹²¹

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THE WISDOM OF THE MORALLY-CENTERED UNIVERSITY

by Mary F. Ruzicka

Today's universities are a source of power. This power is a direct result of the universities' role as custodians of knowledge and research which, in addition to forming students' minds and lives, wields major influence on decisions in the contemporary world. With this influence, universities have a major impact on the economic and social life throughout the world.

With such power comes moral responsibility. As discussed by Richard P. Traina, president of Clark University, "Not wanting to appear self-righteous . . . university communities have too often stopped talking about their responsibilities in moral terms. . . Yet, the cost of moral silence in education can be considerable." Not only is there the price to pay on decisions for the world at large, but there is also the incalculable cost of millions of students "encouraged by such moral silence to think that the sole purpose of higher education is their personal material and social advancement, their individual welfare and development." It may be that the materialism and excessive individualism so often attributed to American society are actually promoted by a regular absence of moral concern at the institutional level (Traina, 1997, p.14).

The university's moral responsibility is to look inward to assess and to adjust its own culture and ethos in terms of content, goals and means to the goal, thereby engaging in varying aspects of applied ethics. Such an ethical self-analysis or ethics/values audit has many facets, such as studying the ethical responsibilities of the faculty regarding research and knowledge, as well as evaluating ethical practices in administration, admissions, athletics, commuter/resident life, etc. (as in administrative use of power, honesty in student recruitment, retention of athletes, racism and sexual harassment on campus, and so on).

An additional tool in the university's effort to ensure a morally-centered university is a Center for Ethics in Higher Education. Going well beyond the ethics of specific professions or disciplines (as in Ethics in Business or Biomedical Ethics), a Center for Ethics in Higher Education searches for wisdom (right ordering) in the study of the impact of the ethos and the complexities of life in higher education on the moral and ethical quality of colleges and universities. Such a Center for Ethics in Higher Education is a direct response to the mandate given in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (1990) to focus on the moral life of the

institution. *Ex Corde*, meant to be "a sort of 'magna carta'" for Catholic universities, provides the overall framework for the vision, goals and standards for the ethical analysis of a Catholic institution of higher education.

The essential principle of the university, i.e., its specific identity (Newman, 1873) is the professoriate, the intellectual life — research and teaching — of its professors and the consequent learning of its students:

[A university's] constitutive endowment lies not in buildings or equipment, civil status or revenues, but in the intellectual life of its professors. (Lonergan, 1988)

Therefore, the major component of moral/ethical analysis for the university lies in the academic/scholarly pursuit of knowledge and research by faculty. To develop and nourish their intellectual life, the professoriate needs the opportunity and means for transformation of knowledge into pursuit of wisdom [right ordering in knowledge and research] in each discipline. This pursuit of wisdom, which is the maturity of a life intent on truth, is THE goal of the Catholic university. Mindful of the Catholic university's moral responsibility toward the contemporary culture, the wisdom of all the disciplines must be brought to study the serious social problems of our time, and to communicate to students and to the world "those ethical and religious principles which give full meaning to human life" (*Ex Corde*, 33). Thus, it can be seen that a major moral responsibility of the university is enabling and enhancing the knowledge and research of the faculty in gaining the wisdom proper to their discipline. It is this that wields awesome influence and power through the minds of students and in shaping the world.

Ex Corde Ecclesiae (1990) is the latest call to examination and accountability from the scholarly giants studying contemporary Catholic universities and their unique role in modern culture. Beginning with John Henry Cardinal Newman's (1873, 1896) monumental works up to Lonergan (1975, 1988), Vertin (1980), Turner (1992), Gleason (1995) and *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, the message is clear that there is a current and grave crisis of knowledge in higher education, including in Catholic universities: the fragmentation of knowledge due to the overspecialization and rigid compartmentalization of the disciplines with no organiz-

ing principle to relate them to each other. This phenomenon is a result of the explosion of knowledge from the modern sciences, which neo-scholasticism, grounded in Aristotelian thought and until the 20th century the integrating principle among the disciplines, has proved unable to handle due to naive and unworkable methodology (Lonergan, 1975). Further, it has been shown, with the advent of the Second Vatican Council, which stressed that Catholics should be open to all that is good in the modern achievements of science and scholarship, that the neo-scholastic synthesis was not capable of integrating even the various theological disciplines themselves (Liddy, 1996). The result, previously mentioned, is contemporary academic life in the university suffering the loss of an all embracing philosophy that relates all the disciplines to each other with a common core and the curriculum going the way of increasing specialization.

Gradually, there began to take place in Catholic universities a battle between an over-arching integrating vision that tended to be "imposed from on high" and, on the other hand, the products of modernity: individual autonomous departments with scholarly competence in specialized disciplines. (Gleason, 1995, p.296)

Philosophically speaking, empiricism (equating knowledge with sense experience) now has moved into postmodernism with no philosophical framework except a pluralism that is reductionist, relativist and skeptical. Catholic universities need to move away from this trend; they should provide a distinctly Catholic matrix for debate, teaching and research, and restore the integrating principle of all the disciplines (Turner, 1992). Mandated to seek a higher synthesis of knowledge, Catholic universities need to be the place where faculty can search for and find wisdom for their research and teaching.

To put it more concretely, we go to great expense to have Catholic universities, but if our professors cannot be anything more than specialists in physics, specialists in chemistry, specialists in biology, specialists in history, if they can search and search for philosophic and theological aids to give them the orientation that would be specifically Catholic in their fields, and still not find them, because neither philosophy nor theology is doing its job of integrating, then we have a problem. (Lonergan, 1984, p.9)

The path of reconstructing the lost unity of knowledge is in the renewal of Catholic intellectual life, where

its sponsors have convictions to accomplish this utopian task with a new intellectual tradition. The "Catholic university is the natural home for this" (Liddy, 1996). Culturally Catholic faculty members and practicing-Catholic faculty members, as well as skeptics, need to dialogue on these points (Turner, 1992).

The task ahead is for Catholic universities to develop a strong philosophy as an integrating principle among all knowledge:

... a philosophy on the level of the times: that is, a philosophy familiar with the history and methods of modern science and modern scholarship. Without such an intimate familiarity with the products and "coin" of contemporary culture, Catholics can lament all they want about the shortcomings of the present culture, but they will not be speaking in a language that presents a positive vision for contemporary culture. (Liddy, 1996)

From this strong philosophy, ensuring that no one discipline exceeds its boundaries and pronounces on subjects beyond its province, comes power in theology as this is the organizing principle of keeping the circle of disciplines within their own limits with due appreciation of them all (*Ex Corde*, n 19). It would appear that Newman's (1873) point is still valid: that, without theology as a legitimate science, the circle of studies is perverted/deformed by the absence of its organizing principles (such as that of the basic dignity of mankind), and other sciences will then exceed their boundaries with statements beyond their province, as is witnessed by the tendency of the natural sciences to move into the human sciences, and for the human sciences to move into the province of theology.

Another contemporary perversion/distortion of morality in academia is for the professoriate to follow the trend to surrender the aspiration of wisdom in their research and knowledge to the mere gathering of information (Haughey, 1998). Wisdom performs a charismatic, recontouring function that is necessary if Catholic universities are to influence the modern world. A Catholic university should advance the pursuit of wisdom and its faculty's vision of it by commitment to a sustained serious dialogue on wisdom and its component of commitment to the common good (Haughey, 1996; Toth, 1998).

The current pressure on faculty to produce quality research, which then shapes the ethos of Catholic colleges and universities (Newman, 1873; Lonergan, 1975; Haughey, 1998), should be deeply intertwined with the

Catholic university's institutional identity issue and the faculty's own vision of the meta-ethics or spirituality undergirding their research — although most faculty are forced to choose research more pragmatically because of the exigencies of the everyday situation. Nevertheless, the meta-ethics of research [i.e., call, self-appropriation or interiority, the sovereignties of disciplines, the common good, stewards of the goods of information, and discernment (Haughey, 1996)], assist faculty in developing a clearer rationale for what they do with the purpose of theistic transcendence. Working within this framework, the professoriate will do research [in a] discipline, which has a transcendent finality that connects it to pursuing and attaining truth beyond the self.

Newman's (1873) ideal of the unity of knowledge — i.e., the university represents the "whole" in knowledge, wherein the curriculum relates each of the sciences to each other and to the whole, and from which flows "enlargement of the mind" (Newman, 1896) even if students do not study all the various disciplines — needs to be reconstituted and with new integrating tools. In addition, given the close connection between research and teaching, there needs to be a special concern and examination for the ethical and moral implication of the methods and discoveries of all disciplines as they relate toward the whole development of the person, but especially so in the areas of science and technology (*Ex Corde*, n 18,20). To move toward reconstructing this oneness of knowledge with a strong, contemporary, integrating philosophical base that scholars of the academy from Newman (1873) through Haughey (1998) say is the hallmark of the university, and to enable faculty to seek wisdom in their research, there must be an enabling venue designated in the university where, among other fruitful work, this can take place. Such a venue is a Center for Ethics in Higher Education which would provide (1) a structured opportunity (with fellows, released time, etc.),

(2) the institutionalization of required ethical and moral analysis in higher education, as well as (3) a site for assistance in the professoriate's pursuit of wisdom and the common good.

A Center for Ethics in Higher Education, interdisciplinary and ecumenical by design, would engage its faculty in research, conduct conferences and seminars, publish books, articles and proceedings on all the complexities of the ethical/moral life and its responsibilities in higher education. Unique and more foundational than other universities' ethics centers, which focus on just one aspect of curriculum/professions, a Center for Ethics in Higher Education would serve every aspect of the university while ensuring that the most important reason for existing is not forgotten or minimized: the unselfish passing on of the ardent search for truth, knowledge and wisdom to students. Then, the university would live out the fact that "...the very reason for the existence of Catholic universities is the transformation of knowledge" (Liddy, 1996, p.3).

Although constituted to perform many objectives, a Center for Ethics in Higher Education finds its highest fulfillment in: affirming the "intrinsic value of knowledge and research" (*Ex Corde*, n.15) of the faculty; understanding this research's relation to the contemporary self-understanding and mission of the Catholic university; the formulating of an integrating principle of knowledge; and always upholding the cause of the human person.

The "Catholic university is one of the best instruments the Church offers to our age searching for certainty and wisdom" (*Ex Corde*, n 10). From here, the awesome influence on students' minds and the influence on contemporary culture can be structured and go forth.

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SETON HALL UNIVERSITY AND CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING: A CONSUMMATION DEVOUTLY TO BE WISHED

by William J. Toth

Somewhere in his formidable literary corpus the German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer addresses what he considers the contemporary epochal struggle. According to Gadamer, across every boundary of place and culture, the "public" world of market and commercialized relationships is rapidly if not inexorably colonizing the world of domesticity. Social critics in America have highlighted some concrete manifestations of Gadamer's thesis: a single father whose computer job is so demanding he takes his four-year-old daughter to work with him at 2 a.m.; parents so busy they pencil into their *Daytimers* their children's names and scheduled sessions for "quality time"; families where common meals are a thing of the past — each member serving up his or her own meal via his or her own microwave in his or her own room. In a recent cartoon, a receptionist at an HMO office blithely announces to a patient: "It's a cost cutting measure. We've replaced all our doctors with licensed accountants." Sic transit the doctor-patient relationship. The commercialization of our social life extends even to contemporary courtship patterns where each new commitment is dutifully previewed by legal counsel for both parties. Finally, commercialization transcends life itself. Woody Allen portrays hell as being eternally locked in a closet with one's insurance agent who reads and meticulously explains the fine print of a standard term insurance policy. Dante Alighieri — call your office!

My thesis in this essay is a rather simple one. Despite the enormous growth in the market value of our economic assets and the corresponding secular sanctification of market forces, we are living in a dysfunctional culture. I define a dysfunctional culture as one that is reductionist, i.e. one that reflects and responds to a very narrow band of specialized feedback and ignores the presence or absence of other key indicators of social well-being. That there is a widening gap between the rich and the poor in our society which, according to William McDonough, chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, threatens to destroy the social fabric of our country, that one third of American men between the ages of 25 and 34 do not earn enough to keep a family of four out of poverty, that the leading cause of death among black males ages 18 through 29 is homicide, along with all the other manifest social realities of domestic violence, racism, teen suicide, widespread depression and anxi-

ety, abortion, drugs, broken marriages and families, should at least cause us to question whether we need a more inclusive measure of social well being than the volume and price of stocks traded on the floor of Wall Street.

What does all this have to do with the Catholic character and identity of Seton Hall University?

This leads me to the second part of my thesis which albeit is both complex and expansive. I submit that a Catholic university like Seton Hall, institutionally committed to the principles of Catholic social teaching, can form the leadership of tomorrow that will melt the frozen artifact of commercialism and consumerism against which the persistent human hopes for fulfillments, rights and values are dashed. I submit that a Catholic university like Seton Hall, drawing upon its neglected treasure — the principles of Catholic social teaching — has in fact a critical social mission in the next millennium: to promote the transcendent dignity of the human person realized in community and to challenge all forms of social arrangements that marginalize human beings and divert the resources of society from the many to the few.

Admittedly, this is a tall order. In meeting it, the University would have to deal with a few primordial disconcerting issues. To what extent is the administration willing to support the introduction of forums and course offerings on the graduate and undergraduate level that deal explicitly with Catholic social teachings and that challenge some of the reigning reductionist ideologies operative in the business, legal, nursing and educational professions? Obviously, whatever support the administration gives to this effort should be done in a magnanimous and humble spirit. Catholic clergy and laity do not have a monopoly on the central tenets of Catholic social teaching such as commitment to human dignity, the common good, the well-being of the poor in our society. On a deeper level, we would also expect to see the administration *institutionalize* Catholic social teaching in its strategic planning, policies and programs. Are just wages and decent working conditions provided for all Seton Hall faculty and employees? Is the human factor — on campus and off — more important than university revenues? Is faculty creativity and vision rewarded or stymied by bureaucratic hierarchical overlays? If the ethos of Seton Hall is shaped by Catholic social teaching it should make a difference not only in how the university is managed

but in the kind of student that the University sends forth into the world. Are we sending students forth with the desire and capabilities of transforming the workplace, the public arena and the culture at large?

Recent popes have talked about creating a "civilization of love." Only love will neutralize our society's Faustian bargain with dominative power and create the conditions in which real people can flourish. Only love is worthy of every human being. Seton Hall University, true

to its Catholic identity and committed to its Catholic social ethos, can lead young men and women to master balance sheets, federal court procedures, quadratic equations, sound bytes and gigabytes. It can also teach young men and women how to harness for God the energies of love. Surely then, to paraphrase Teilhard, for the second time in the story of the world — we will have discovered fire.

The Question of Wisdom

"WISDOM" AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE DISCIPLINES

by Richard M. Liddy

Thomas Aquinas wrote about two dimensions of wisdom. One was supernatural; it came "from above." It was a gift of the Holy Spirit, a share in God's own knowledge. But Aquinas also spoke about another dimension of wisdom, a natural wisdom, and surprisingly enough, he identifies this with Aristotle's metaphysics! Such wisdom was not limited to a particular field of knowledge but was an over-arching and integrating view of the various realms of knowledge. It was "a view of the whole"; it was, in Cardinal Newman's phrase, "a science of the sciences."¹¹

Now our postmodern age is very suspicious of any "view of the whole." However, I believe that one must have some such operative or implicit view in order to operate in this world at all. Such a view, even when only implicit, constitutes an "undertow" in all one's activities.

Commenting on Aquinas' view of wisdom, Bernard Lonergan once wrote:

In the natural order, wisdom is Aristotle's first philosophy, his metaphysics, and that gives rise to a problem. How does one discover that Aristotle's first philosophy is wisdom? Why not take some other philosopher? Why Aristotle? In particular, how did Thomas know that he had to go beyond Aristotle's metaphysics, beyond hylomorphism, matter and form, to posit essence and existence as the principle elements of his analysis of being? St. Thomas himself corrected and amplified Aristotle's first philosophy. Where does this wisdom come from? How does one acquire wisdom?¹²

In other words, if wisdom in this general sense is an over-arching and integrating vision, how does one arrive at it? Lonergan answers his own question by first noting that "there is no rule of thumb for producing wisdom." Wisdom is not something we start with, but something we head towards. We only reach it through the long and difficult process of striving to know.

Nevertheless, if wisdom is something ahead of us, how do we make good judgments as we head towards it? Towards this "view of the whole?" How do we make good judgments now, prior to our having achieved wisdom? Lonergan's answer — as Aquinas' and Plato's — is that from the start we have within us a rudimentary "view of the whole." Otherwise, as Plato saw so clearly, we would

never be able to say, "That's it! That's the answer to my question - that's what I have been looking for!" Without a heuristic anticipation of what true answers would "look like," we would never be able to say with Archimedes "Eureka!" "I've found it!" We would never be able to say, "I've been mistaken — true judgments lie in this other direction."

Lonergan calls this heuristic anticipation of truth "the notion of being." It is ourselves as intellectually open to learning everything about everything. It is our pure detached disinterested desire to know. Although initially this anticipation is empty, it heads us towards a knowledge of the concrete universe in all its aspects.

When there is nothing in a box, a box does not feel empty; when there is nothing in a stomach, the stomach does feel empty. Human intelligence is more like a stomach than like a box. Though it has no answers, and so is empty, still it can ask questions.¹³

Wisdom and Intellectual Conversion

There is, then, what one might call an implicit anticipation of wisdom identical with our human spirits; but as Aristotle emphasized, the road from this implicit anticipation to its explicit realization is a long and difficult one. "Knowledge makes a bloody entrance." In fact, as Lonergan himself points out, the road to this explicit wisdom is akin to a conversion. It is a movement from the child's materialism to the adolescent's idealism to a mature realism. A moment in its attainment might be illustrated by the physicist, Freeman Dyson, and his description of his students learning quantum physics.

The student begins by learning the tricks of the trade. He learns how to make calculations in quantum mechanics and get the right answers ... To learn the mathematics of the subject and to learn how to use it takes about six months. This is the first stage in learning quantum mechanics, and it is comparatively easy and painless. The second stage comes when the student begins to worry because he does not understand what he has been doing. He worries because he has no clear physical picture in his head. He gets confused in trying to arrive at a physical explanation for each of the mathematical tricks he

has been taught. He works very hard and gets discouraged because he does not seem able to think clearly. This second stage often lasts six months or longer, and it is strenuous and unpleasant. Then, quite unexpectedly, the third stage begins. The student suddenly says to himself, "I understand quantum mechanics," or rather he says, "I understand now that there really isn't anything to be understood."¹⁴

That is, there is nothing to be understood in "the physical picture" in which the student previously sought to understand physics. Indeed, the conversion away from dependence on such mental pictures constitutes a new level in one's understanding of physics. This process can be discerned in learning any new discipline, a process as much of letting go of illusions as of new learning.

Now wisdom in the sense of a general view of things consists in going through the same process of intellectual conversion as one comes to a view about how the various disciplines and areas of knowing hang together and how they are related to ourselves and to the universe.

Wisdom and a Critical Philosophy

Lonergan calls the philosophical form of such an intellectual conversion a critical realism. Such an attainment of an adequate philosophy about "how things hang together" is a high achievement. It is a personal development parallel to Aristotle's move beyond the early materialists and beyond Plato to a realist philosophy. In contemporary terms it is a move beyond empiricism and postmodern relativism to a critical, that is, a self-aware, realism.

For the Enlightenment ushered in the age of specializing intellect. Specializations reveal more and more about less and less. Eventually narrowness succumbs to decreasing returns and the need for "generalists" is felt. Interdisciplinary studies arise. Philosophical questions emerge: How are the disciplines related? How are they linked to the mind of the scientist? the scholar? the philosopher? What is meant by "the mind?" by "reality?" by "being objective?"¹⁵

Such general questions are answered differently by empiricists, idealists, phenomenologists, pragmatists, realists. Today some are calling for "A Second Enlightenment" which would seek the answers to such questions in an analysis of the human spirit in its own interiority.¹⁶ Such an analysis brings to light the intrinsic realism of the human spirit.

What is a realist philosophy? It is the view that words

and sentences such as I am typing now have a meaning in the "real world." It is the view that my very spirit - and yours, dear reader - are meant to understand each other correctly - and to understand ourselves correctly. Such a view understands reality not as what I can see and touch, or what I can imagine and "picture," but what I arrive at through true judgments. Such a realist philosophy transcends a childish view of reality as "already out there now" reflected in various types of materialism and empiricism. It also transcends a more sophisticated view of reality as "already in here now" - such as is found in modern idealism, various types of phenomenology and postmodern relativism.

Such a critical realism is rooted in the basic methodology of the human spirit as it moves from human experiencing to understanding to judging to deciding. In whatever area one chooses that basic methodology is operative. That methodology specifies the basic question that is the human spirit as it moves through human experience to the intelligible, to the true, to the good. It leads to what satisfies my spirit, and our common human spirit, on its deepest level.

Such a view understands metaphysics not as a conceptual system to be imposed on the autonomous sciences and disciplines from the outside — the unfortunate story of decadent scholasticism — but "a view of the whole" expressing the anticipations of the human spirit unfolding in the various autonomous disciplines. It is not the whole of knowledge, but the whole in knowledge. Such a view, precisely because it reflects the basic methodology of the human spirit as it heads for being, will tend to purify the individual disciplines of their totalitarian pretensions, and integrate them into a comprehensive view of the virtualities of the human spirit. That view will include not only our common sense living, but also the empirical disciplines, the scholarly disciplines and an adequate view of the human person.

Such a natural wisdom is, as we noted, a high achievement. Most people, including most scientists and scholars, tend to just drift into a philosophy that is some form of naive realism. On a more sophisticated level that naive realism finds expression in an empiricism, an idealism, a relativism. Very few reach the type of realism, or natural wisdom, exemplified by an Aristotle, an Aquinas, a Lonergan. Yet the presence or absence of this wisdom influences all our knowing.

Now we are not discussing a merely technical point in philosophy. Empiricism, idealism, and realism name three totally different horizons with

no common identical objects. An idealist never means what an empiricist means, and a realist never means what either of them means.^[7]

Wisdom and the Transformation of the Disciplines

Now my point in highlighting Aquinas' conception of natural wisdom as developed by Lonergan is to highlight the fact that one's philosophy, one's implicit or explicit view of "how things hang together," influences how one views one's own knowing in other areas. It influences and underpins how a professor views his or her own discipline. One's view of "the whole," since it is a view of oneself as knower and what one is capable of knowing, constitutes an undertow to all one's knowing.

To give an example, the modern mechanistic view of physics has given way in our day to a much more "intentional" view of what the physicist is doing when he is doing physics. In fact, there is discernible a development in the way the great modern minds in physics have themselves viewed physics. Einstein held that quantum theory was merely a set of coherent statements that allows a person to work with the evidence that light is both a wave and a particle. But a radically different view of quantum theory was taken by Niels Bohr, no less eminent than Einstein in the history of modern physics. Bohr agreed with Einstein in saying that quantum theory does not describe or characterize the way things really are; but he went on to say that neither does the rest of physics nor the rest of science nor the rest of human knowing generally. All that we can know are our own operations, nothing beyond that. A third position, taken by Werner Heisenberg, is that what quantum theory tends toward is indeed a characterization of sub-atomic reality as such. Einstein asked: "How can it do that, since, you know, it doesn't hang together in sensible terms?" Heisenberg answered that the real is more than the sensible.^[8] There is discernible in these three views of the nature of physics a move from empiricism to idealism to a realism.

Other examples of one's philosophy influencing one's interpretation of one's discipline are readily at hand. For example, I subscribe to *The Journal of Consciousness Studies*. The contributors range everywhere from neuro-biologists, cognitive scientists and experts on artificial intelligence to psychologists, philosophers and theologians. Now there is a major underlying battle going on in the pages of this journal between those who deny that there is any such reality as consciousness (it is merely an "epiphenomenon") to those whom the journal generally terms "phenomenologists." The latter gener-

ally believe there is "something more" to human understanding than can be understood from computerized neuro-biological research. But for the most part they are at a loss to clearly specify that "something more." Every issue of the journal involves a battle between these underlying schools of thought and their respective interpretations of biology, neuro-biology and various levels of psychology.^[9]

To turn to the discipline of history, what are historical facts? For the empiricist they are what was out there and was capable of being looked at. The emphasis is on more and more data. A conversion - an intellectual conversion - is needed in order to free historical studies from a positivism that treats history merely as discrete and meaningless events removed from their original context.^[10]

Indeed, in this century the discipline of history has undergone a "Copernican revolution" symbolized by the following quote of R. G. Collingwood:

...so far from relying on an authority other than himself, to whose statements his thought must conform, the historian is his own authority and his thought is autonomous, self-authorizing, possessed of a criterion to which his so-called authorities must conform and by reference to which they are criticized.^[11]

If ever there was a statement of the inner criterion of the human spirit that guides us to explicit wisdom, that is it. But even Collingwood's Idealist tendency must be transcended in order to arrive at a realist view of human history. Writing of the activity of human judging, Lonergan makes a reflection which, I believe, can be applied to a great number of postmodern writers.

There is an insufficient awareness of this third level of cognitional activity in the authors we have been mentioning and a resultant failure to break away cleanly and coherently from both empiricism and Idealism the break from both empiricism and idealism involves the elimination of cognitional myth. There are notions of knowledge and of reality that are formed in childhood, that are in terms of seeing and of what's there to be seen, that down the centuries have provided the unshakable foundations of materialism, empiricism, positivism, sensism, phenomenism, behaviorism, pragmatism, and that at the same time constitute the notions of knowledge and reality that idealists know to be nonsense.^[12]

For the historian with idealist tendencies historical facts are mental constructions carefully based on data recorded in documents. For the critical realist they are events in the world mediated by true acts of meaning.

My point here is to illustrate that one's basic achievement of a "view of the whole" penetrates right into the warp and woof of the academic disciplines. One's implicit or explicit philosophy enters into the doing of one's own discipline. It involves one's view of what one is doing when one is researching, setting up hypotheses, seeking verifications. It enters into how one views one's own discipline and its relationship to other disciplines. It enters into how one views oneself and the universe. A professor of neuro-biology who believes that her computer-assisted research into brain waves justifies a materialist view of things, whether she knows it or not, has bought into a particular view of knowledge and the human person within the universe.¹³¹ Similarly, a postmodern sociologist who believes that the endless varieties of human cultures justify a basic incommensurable pluralism among human beings has adopted a particular relativist view of human knowing.

And the power of a discipline over an individual researcher is immense. A young doctoral student is "socialized" into a particular view of his or her discipline. That discipline can act as a "principality and power" that can greatly inhibit the freedom of the individual researcher to ask further questions, especially questions with humanistic and religious implications.¹⁴¹

Wisdom and Integrated Human Studies

What would wisdom look like today? Lonergan himself in his *Insight: An Essay on Human Understanding* articulated a metaphysical view, rooted in a transformed self-understanding, that would result in a transformation and integration of the individual sciences and common sense knowing. In various later writings he indicated the need for this kind of wisdom by pointing to a work by Gibson Winter, *Elements for a Social Ethic: The Role of Social Science in Public Policy*.¹⁵¹ In his work Winter distinguishes various types or styles of social science; each of these styles is appropriate for dealing with different areas of human reality, but at the same time demands critique when unilaterally used to understand other areas.

Winter distinguishes four styles: the physical, the functional, the voluntarist, and the intentional. The physical style considers that the methods of natural science are the only scientific methods; it is positivist, behaviorist, reductionist. The functional style understands social structures and processes by grasping the functions

of parts in the whole; it is associated with the name of Talcott Parsons. The voluntarist style stresses power, conflict and ideology; it is associated with the name of C. Wright Mills. The intentional style is phenomenological; its subjective dimensions are the constituting intentionalities of embodied consciousness; its objective dimensions are the forms in which the world appears for this consciousness. This style was transposed from Vienna to America by Alfred Schutz.¹⁶¹

Winter concludes that the different types of social scientists are helpful in treating different problems. He found behaviorists most likely to be helpful in dealing with traffic problems, voluntarists in analyzing revolutionary situations, functionalists in understanding ongoing processes, and phenomenologists in entering into the mentalities and aspirations that motivate and direct social continuity and change. In other words, the scientific tools helpful for thinking about human beings in traffic jams, are totally inadequate for thinking about the full scope of human involvements. Only an over-arching and integrating view of the whole can evaluate the different styles of social science appropriate to different areas of investigation while at the same time highlighting the weaknesses of the various specializations.

Wisdom and the Question of God

Finally, the point here is not only the genuine autonomy of the individual disciplines but also the relations of the autonomous disciplines to each other, to the person of the researcher and, I believe, to the transcendent question that each person is. For genuine interdisciplinary dialogue, to the extent that it expresses the inquiring spirit of the human community, must of its nature be philosophical, ethical and religious. Just as the human spirit is an anticipation of being, of everything about everything, so an adequate understanding of the human spirit inevitably leads to the question of God. For to question questioning is self-destructive; our spirits inevitably head "beyond"—beyond even this world.

To understand the human person is to understand one who is a transcendent question. The question of God, then, lies within our human horizon. We are diminished as persons unless we are stretching forth to the totally intelligible, the source of truth and goodness. The reach, not of our attainment, but of our intending is unrestricted.

There lies within his horizon a region for the divine, a shrine for ultimate holiness. It cannot be ignored. The atheist may pronounce it empty.

The agnostic may urge that he finds his investigation has been inconclusive. The contemporary humanist will refuse to allow the question to arise. But their negations presuppose the spark in our clod, our native orientation to the divine.¹¹⁷

A natural wisdom, then, an adequate philosophy, is able to relate the various sciences and human studies to each other, to our common sense knowing and to the question of God. To do this, however, it has to be rooted in an adequate self-knowledge, a self-knowledge arrived at only through the difficult process of intellectual conversion.

This need for intellectual conversion, for natural wisdom, is not easily grasped. There is a natural distaste for developments that have not taken place in us and need to take place. There are the biases of self-centeredness and group selfishness. There are the biases of the guilds, the disciplines themselves as social organisms. There is, deepest of all, a "hatred for the light" masquerading under various inadequate philosophies and cultural mind-sets. People often "prefer the darkness to the light."

To penetrate this darkness we need the supernatural wisdom that Aquinas also wrote about, the wisdom of the Holy Spirit, that unites us with the mind of God. The light of that wisdom can pierce our darkness and shine in our hearts and our minds. That wisdom "from above" is also a healing wisdom, one that would heal our human reason "to be reasonable" and to strive for a natural wisdom — like Aristotle's metaphysics, a comprehensive and integrating view of the whole.¹¹⁸

Beyond the wisdom we may attain by the natural light of our intellects, there is a further wisdom attained through the supernatural light of faith, when the humble surrender of our own light to the self-revealing uncreated Light makes the latter the loved law of all our assents....(F)aith, besides involving a contact with reason, also involves a contact with God. On that side wisdom is a gift of the Holy Spirit, making us docile to his movements, in which, even perceptibly, one may be "non solum discens sed et patiens divina."¹¹⁹

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1. For an excellent and fascinating account of wisdom in Aquinas see Bernard Lonergan, "Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas," *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 2 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) 78-87.
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3. B. Lonergan, "Collection," *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 4 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988) 200.
4. Freeman Dyson, "Innovation in Physics," in Rapport and Wright, ed., *Physics* (New York, Washington Square Press, 1965) 259-260.
5. Cf. Bernard Lonergan, "Questionnaire on Philosophy," *Method: Journal of Lonergan Studies* 2 (October 1984) 9.
6. Cf. Fred Lawrence, "The Modern Philosophic Differentiation of Consciousness or 'What is the Enlightenment,'" in Fred Lawrence (ed.) *Lonergan Workshop Vol. II* (Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981) 231-279.
7. *ibid.*, 239.
8. Cf. a very excellent discussion of the different views of the various disciplines rooted in divergent underlying philosophies in the interview with Michael Vertin, "Dialogues in Celebration," *Thomas More Institute Papers* 80 (Thomas More Institute, Montreal, 1980) 212 ff. In *Method in Theology*, 239, Lonergan puts the differences in one's operative philosophy of physics this way: "An empiricist may argue that quantum theory cannot be about physical reality; it cannot because it deals only with relations between phenomena. An idealist would concur and add that, of course, the same is true of all science and, indeed, of the whole of human knowing. The critical realist will disagree with both: a verified hypothesis is probably true; and what probably is true refers to what in reality probably is so."
9. This battle just reflects the longer battle in the history of the psychology: from the behaviorists with their insistence on "nothing but" sensation, to the Freudians with their insistence on "nothing but" the unconscious, to the Jungians and other humanistic schools of psychology that go beyond a focus on human pathology to the self-actualizing potentialities of the human psyche. How do these three sets of positions in psychology relate to each other? Does one emphasize what the others miss? Is there some way to come to an integrated "vision of the whole?" some wisdom?
10. Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 200-201, referring to a 19th century handbook on historical study which "removed the facts from their historical context, isolated them from one another, reduced them, as it were, to a powder."
11. R. G. Collingwood, *The Idea of History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1946) 37; quoted in Lonergan, *Method in Theology*, 206.
12. *ibid.*, 213.
13. Cf. Steven Rose, *New York Times Book Review*, September 11, 1994, 38: "Thus Dr. Damasio insists that as materialists (and all neurologists must surely be materialists) we should not speak of the mind/brain system, but rather of the mind/brain/body system."
14. George Marsden in *The Outrageous Idea of Christian Scholarship* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997) catalogues the enlightenment bias against allowing religious questions to be raised from within the disciplines. On the other hand, I am not sure his philosophical tools are sufficiently acute to achieve the positive result he wishes to achieve.
15. Gibson Winter, *Elements for a Social Ethic: The Role of Social Science in Public Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).
16. B. Lonergan, "The Example of Gibson Winter," *A Second Collection* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996) 190.
17. *Method in Theology*, 103.
18. From a theological point of view this needed transformation of the disciplines seems to be what David L. Schindler is aiming at in the interview read at our workshop, "Going to the Heart: An Interview with David L. Schindler," *Turnaround* (March, 1998), 16-21.
19. "...Not only learning but receiving divine movements." Bernard Lonergan, "Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas," *Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan* 2, 100.

"THE SAINTS AND POETS, MAYBE - THEY DO SOME." SOME THOUGHTS ON THE PLACE OF THEATER IN A CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

by James P. McGlone

Any Catholic university theater director daring or silly enough to seek approval from religious critics of the theater might melt under the heat of the preacher's fire and brimstone. St. Augustine, for example, thundered at Romans who were "searching for theaters, pouring into them, filling them, behaving more irresponsibly than ever before. It is this spiritual disease, degeneration, decline into immorality and indecency that Scipio feared when he opposed the erection of theaters. He saw how easily ease and plenty would soften and ruin you. He did not wish you to be free from fear."¹¹ Obviously, the great saint would not be the man to ask for a recommendation for a position as a theater director in a Catholic university!

And yet, college theatricals are almost as old as universities, and Cardinal Newman warned us that a university is not a seminary.¹² We can't protect students from the world around them. We must prepare them for it. So, the question isn't whether or not there is a place for college theater on a Catholic campus, but where and how does play production fit in that place?

"What kind of deities," Augustine wrote, "are those who love theatrical plays and demand them as a part of worship in their honor? Their power proves that they exist and this passion shows that they are evil. We know how Plato regarded these scenic exhibitions, since he considered that poets, for composing songs unworthy of the majesty and goodness of the gods, should be banished from the state."¹³

There is some back-handed praise for the playhouse buried in those remarks. For one thing, Augustine acknowledges the power actors have over an audience's passions. There is something tactile, immediate, stimulating about the stage. The backstage smells of drying paint and freshly cut pine, the laughter at a blown cue, a dropped prop, or a startling interpretation, such impressions add up for the poor player to a rare feeling of community. Once the curtain goes up, the collaborative interaction between old and young, male and female, intelligent and intuitive, attractive and plain, is so vibrant and cooperative an activity that it excites the imagination and releases the spirit of both audience and performer alike. When performers anxiously solicit laughter and applause, they invite the audience into their creation. Audience reactions are an immediate indica-

tion they have performed their metier well that evening. Actor and auditor alike enter the quiet of a dark auditorium to inhale the intoxicating air of communal contemplation. Augustine was right to respect the latent power of the playhouse. It is for the actor and his audience a social, public, communal celebration. Of course, it can be dangerous. Any responsible communal authority ought rightly to be concerned about it.

So, how does a Catholic university play director go about assuaging Augustine's and Plato's anxieties? The solution, it seems to me, is to select compositions worthy "of the majesty and goodness of the gods." If you are Catholic, raised in a family that prized that faith above all other possessions, and, at the same time, enthralled by the stage, dare you attempt to put the two together?

It seems to me axiomatic that an actor who is a believer cannot help bringing his or her faith into the world of make-believe. If Catholic universities were built to make sure that their intellectual vision got a chance to make an appearance on the academic world stage, shouldn't the theater director select plays permeated by a Catholic cultural atmosphere for that same world scene? Of course, you can expect those outside of the Catholic tradition to call such selectivity a form of parochial censorship. But, as with a curricular requirement, co-curricular play selection does not tell the student what to think. It merely provides the student with something to think about. No one would suggest that plays produced on a Catholic university campus are the only plays being done, nor would one suggest that others can't or shouldn't be performed. The Catholic University theater director simply chooses, as he or she has every right to do, to produce those scripts that reflect the Catholic vision of the good, the true, and, thus, the beautiful.

Irish playwright Hugh Leonard's take on this subject can help us here. "The Irish writer," he wrote, "is alone in the world in the sense that in every other country the existence of God is doubted and a serious play becomes a search for a god, not God, a search for a purpose and meaning. The Irish writer is different in that he accepts God and so do his characters."¹⁴ It is important to note that Leonard is not talking specifically about religion. He is describing artistic, emotional, and thus, theatrical atmosphere. A superb and acknowledged craftsman

would desire. *Fin de Partie* (Endgame) has outraged the Philistines, earned the contempt of halfwits and filled those who are capable of telling the difference between a theater and a bawdy house with a profound and sombre paradoxical joy.⁽¹⁵⁾ Isn't it amusing what passes these days for intellectual conversation?

Hugh Leonard's *Da*, on the other hand, represents an entirely different approach to the theater. Born in a suburb of Dublin and educated by the Presentation Brothers, Leonard, whose real name is John Byrne, began writing while working as a civil servant. After having three plays produced by the Abbey, Ireland's National Theater, he gave up his day job and began scriptwriting for Irish radio. His 1962 adaptation of Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* won him instant recognition as a master of stagecraft. *Da*, written in 1973, has been awarded numerous theater awards, including a Tony in 1978.⁽¹⁶⁾

The delicate theatrical construction of this memory play is obvious even on the printed page. The character of son Charlie is played by two actors - Charlie Then and Charlie Now. This stage convention provides the director with an opportunity to make fluid use of stage space, allowing for complex shifts backwards and forwards in time. Charlie Now is a sophisticated London writer returned to bury his father and tie up the loose ends left behind by his irresponsible parent. The contrast between his father's contentment with his place in life, and his son's anger at class distinctions, Irish political ineptitude, and his father's humility, are neatly drawn by interweaving the past and present with the narrator's observations of each event as the action unfolds.

The old fella's wisdom in guarding Charlie Then's endangered chastity by humanizing the object of his desire, *Da*'s single moment of anger over his wife's flirtation with a long extinguished flame from her past, and Charlie Now's loss in the battle of wits with *Da* over the son's gift of charity, are not only hilariously presented, but poignantly observed by the playwright. In the end, Charlie Now realizes the old fella was a good and wise man. Not a success as the world measures success, but a good man, and a good man, as the old music hall song has it, is hard to find.

Charlie: Get away from me. Ignorant man, ignorant life!

Da: Sure I enjoyed myself. And in the windup I didn't die with the arse out of me trousers like the rest of them - I left money.

Charlie: My money.

Da: Jasus, didn't you get it back? And looka . . . if I wouldn't go to England with you before, sure I'll make it up to you. I will now.

Charlie: You what? Like hell you will.

Da: Sure you can't get rid of a bad thing.⁽¹⁷⁾

At the final curtain, Charlie Now and his audience discover the love only a *Da* can offer his son. It is as long lasting as it is unconditional.

Hugh Leonard told a reporter from *The New York Times* that "*Da* set out to be a monument to my father. I wrote the play to pay off a debt to my father. But the play made me successful as a writer and since I couldn't have written it without my father, the debt's now greater than ever."⁽¹⁸⁾

Popular with audiences throughout the English speaking world, *Da* is a startling piece of stagecraft and a profound illustration of a father's love. If Beckett despaired about his character's inability to even commit the ultimate act of desperation, suicide, what chance, outside of a jailhouse,⁽¹⁹⁾ are we likely to find an empathetic audience for his play. Is it not the intention of play producers, actors and designers, to produce plays that people want to see? Plays that give evidence of theatrical craftsmanship to performers studying the theater?

Should Catholic university play directors adapt modern intellectual angst and alienation in order to be contemporary, even when they don't emotionally share the feeling that life is meaningless? Are we afraid to face the charge that we are "Philistines" and "halfwits," choosing to mount plays like *Waiting for Godot* that have no resonance with our audience or our fledgling performers, instead of plays like *Da* that attract audiences and make them laugh and cry?

In his play, *Our Town*, Thornton Wilder tells his story through a stage manager. That quintessential playhouse figure takes the ingenue Emily back to her home after she has died in childbirth. Observing the simple happiness and beauty of domestic life, its familiar activities, the everyday incidents of ordinary existence, Emily asks the Stage Manager if, while on earth and alive, anybody ever understands the wonder of it all. The Stage Manager asserts that "the saints and poets, maybe - they do some."⁽²⁰⁾

So much of contemporary playhouse activity rejects outright the possibility that there even are such things as saints. It takes the mystery and poetry, theatrical and otherwise, out of their productions. Just like the characters in *Waiting for Godot*, these theatrical practitioners are in an eternal waiting pattern, without hope because they can't believe in anything. The whole theatrical exercise,

himself, Leonard would be the last one to deny that the play director's first responsibility is to select a play that exhibits a knowledge of and talent for the craft of theater. Since there is no reason to believe that Catholic cultural assumptions in any way inhibit the practice of theatrical craft, the obligation of the play director on a Catholic campus should be to produce a well crafted script that, at the same time, reflects the culture he has inherited.

There are any number of examples that demonstrate the difficulties and opportunities inherent in performing this task, but Leonard's statement about Irish Theater offers us a useful and convenient place to begin. Let us juxtapose two Irish playwrights and their plays, Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Hugh Leonard's *Da*. Let us first examine these two scripts in order to evaluate their theatricality as well as their cultural reflection. After that the reader can decide which of the plays best suits the profile of a Catholic university theater.

It might surprise the playgoer to hear Samuel Beckett described as an Irish playwright. He was born in Dublin of a financially secure professional family of Huguenot descent and educated at Trinity College. Most of his life, however, was spent in France, and his most famous play, *En attendant Godot*, was written in French.¹⁵¹ When asked by a doctoral student why he wrote in French, Beckett replied: "Parce qu'en français c'est plus facile d'écrire sans style."¹⁶¹ With that in mind, it should not surprise the playhouse patron when the playwright does not attempt to tell a story in his work, because, in his own words, while the audience and the actors are *Waiting for Godot* "nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful."¹⁷¹

Audiences have generally agreed with him. The play received its first English production in London in August 1955. Peter Bull described audience reaction on the first night: "Waves of hostility came whirling over the footlights, and the mass exodus, which was to form such a feature of the run of the piece, started quite soon after the curtain had risen. . . ."¹⁸¹ Beckett's biographer, Deirdre Bair, tells us that the entire "popular press dismissed it as rubbish."¹⁹¹

In spite of the playwright's contempt for style, his dialogue often mimics the patter of music hall comedians.

Vladimir: Charming evening we're having.

Estragon: Unforgettable.

Vladimir: And it's not over.

Estragon: Apparently not.

Vladimir: It's only the beginning.

Estragon: It's awful.

Vladimir: It's worse than being at the theater.

Estragon: The circus.

Vladimir: The music hall.

Estragon: The circus.¹⁰¹

Beckett resorts to what one critic called "an element of crudely physical humor." One character loses his pants, an old vaudeville hat exchange is executed, and one writer counted no fewer than 45 pratfalls in the play's stage directions.¹¹¹ In the Broadway production, burlesque comedian Bert Lahr got rave reviews from puzzled critics, who, like audiences generally, thought the whole thing was nonsense.

The play was saved from oblivion, however, by English critic Kenneth Tynan, who declared a visit to the Arts Theater Club in London a fashionable obligation. He wrote, "It will be conversational necessity for many years to have seen *Waiting for Godot*."¹²¹ When the play was produced in Dublin, producer Alan Simpson credited the notices of Tynan and Harold Hobson of the *Times* with creating curiosity among the Dublin cognoscenti. Simpson, who thought Beckett cagey about publicity, observed that the playwright attracted "culture vultures as a jam pot attracts wasps."¹³¹

So, while theatergoers stayed away in droves, literary critics had a field day with the script. Here is a representative piece of insight from Martin Esslin's *The Theater of the Absurd*. "There is here a truly astonishing parallel between the Existentialist philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and the creative intuition of Beckett. . . . If, for Beckett as for Sartre, man has the duty of facing the human condition as a recognition that at the root of our being there is nothingness, liberty, and the need of constantly creating ourselves in a succession of choices, then *Godot* might well become an image of what Sartre calls 'bad faith' - 'The first act of bad faith consists in evading what one cannot evade, in evading what one is.'"¹⁴¹

Whatever its attraction for the academic world, the script itself exhibits very little of theatrical interest. Not only does nothing happen, the dialogue is often pointless and mostly without character. There is no resolution, because there isn't any confrontation between characters. While it gives evidence of the playwright's acquaintance with theatrical convention, and even of the ritual aspects of dramatic art, it does not employ such devices to tell a story. It is, in short, from the actor and audience viewpoint, a badly crafted playscript.

After you have made that observation publicly, you would be wise to watch out for flying glass. Here's the kind of opprobrium you are likely to evoke. "The reception of Samuel Beckett's new play," wrote Harold Hobson, "has been precisely what the admirers of *Waiting for Godot*

including the poetry of the stage, appears to them to be absurd. It is no wonder that this despairing vision of our world has played to empty seats. Every stage manager is convinced that audiences are make-believers, or he wouldn't be engaged in his line of work. And to be able to make-believe, you must first be able to believe.

I have the feeling that St. Augustine, and Plato before him, would have enjoyed making the acquaintance of Da. They might have smiled ruefully at Beckett's ability to attract "Culture Vultures," but they also would have recognized the despair in his play and felt obliged to warn their fellow citizens of its danger.

In my own case, I never engage myself to direct a play that I don't see before me as I read it. I cannot cast a

play unless I have an empathy for the characters facing the conflict of the play. How do you move actors within the confines of a set design, select costume styles and colors, and background music, when you have no feeling for the characters they are creating? I have spent my life trying to acquire a studied understanding of my craft, while husbanding whatever gift of intuition I have been granted to the end of giving audiences pleasure at the recognition of the beautiful. It's a precarious affair under the best of circumstances, hardly valued by most of academia, but it is an engaging task, and every once in while, without warning, you get a glimpse of something ordinarily seen only by saints or poets.

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SEARCHING FOR WISDOM IN THE MODERN BUSINESS CURRICULUM

by Frederick J. Kelly

A great society is a society in which its men of business think greatly of their function.

Alfred North Whitehead

The evolution of the traditional or typical business school curriculum can be characterized as having gone through four distinct phases since the inception of the Business School as an academic entity in the late 1890s. The first stage was the period from the initial inception of the Business curriculum at Harvard and/or the Wharton School in the late 19th century up to the late 1940s. It included the first codification of curricula standards through the establishment of the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business in 1916. The second period encompasses that time immediately following World War II up to the 1960. During this period business schools experienced phenomenal growth in enrollment, expansion of business programs to a majority of institutions of higher education and substantial curricula change and variation.

The 1960 through 1990 period, the third distinct period in business education, was dominated by the influence of the Gordon and Howell (1959)^[1] and the Pierson (1959)^[2] reports which dominated curricula issues and structure during that period of time. It is also a period of continued growth as well as a period in which women and minorities began to enroll in business programs for the first time in any substantial numbers. The fourth period, that period since 1990, has been structured by the Porter and McKibbin report of 1986 which led to major changes in the philosophy of business education and to a more varied approach to curricula structures.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the curricular philosophy and structure(s) that have evolved during these periods and to examine the extent to which the modern business school seeks to encourage in its students a search for wisdom. The basic learning progression is envisioned as passing from information or facts to knowledge, from knowledge to truth, and from knowledge to wisdom. Wisdom sits at the highest level of learning and can be defined as "the ability to come to the true core of a situation, event or action; understanding why it is occurring; and knowing how to advise or act on that knowledge for a greater goal or a better future."

Has a search for wisdom been a part of the business curriculum? In the earliest days of the business curriculum, i.e. prior to World War II, the curriculum in

business was basically organized as a major that was an addendum to a much larger required core curriculum. The search for knowledge, truth and/or wisdom if it existed during this period resided in the general education component of the curriculum where philosophy or theology were taught. The focus of the business curriculum was highly technical in nature and focused on accounting, business mathematics (as a specialized course and not in lieu of University mathematics requirements), sales techniques, time and motion studies, etc. Basically the focus was on applied technical skills. Wisdom was relegated to the non-business sector of the curriculum which was however the largest component of the students' education. If questions of a search for wisdom came up in the business curricula they were brought to it from an external perspective. The business curriculum focused heavily on facts and knowledge. Truth and wisdom were left to other arenas.

The post World War II period saw tremendous growth in all aspects of higher education, including in the area of education for business. One difference in the business curriculum during this period was the tremendous expansion of business credit hours as part of the degree program. Courses in business became the major part of the curriculum and what had previously been core arts and sciences courses began to have the adjective "business" attached to them. Business students took business math now in lieu of other mathematics; students took business writing in lieu of composition; etc. The curriculum became more and more focused on business topics with little outside perspective being integrated into the discussions. Faculty members were primarily practitioners and the curriculum focused on practical techniques. The focus of this period was more facts, more knowledge. Students however had a much smaller arena in which they might be exposed to a search for truth or wisdom.

The curriculum as it stood in 1959 was subjected to withering criticism by the Gordon and Howell report sponsored by the Ford Foundation and the Pierson report sponsored by the Carnegie Foundation. These reports were especially critical of a lack of theoretical analysis in the curriculum, poor preparation of faculty, too great a focus on "how to" teaching, et. al. Focusing on the internal structures of business programs the reports called for a greater diversity in the curriculum, more liberal arts

and sciences courses, a much better developed theoretical basis for the materials presented, etc.

Collegiate schools of business moved forward aggressively to implement the changes that were called for in these reports, and the business curriculum in the 30 year period following these reports was much different than those of earlier periods. A liberal arts core became standard. Business courses were structured as a progression from data gathering to data analysis to hypothesis and theory development. The curriculum now was organized so as to move from facts to knowledge to a quest for truth. The capstone of the business curriculum was a course called Business Policy. Business Policy was viewed as an integrative course which was to bring together in one place the various facts, knowledge and theories of the rest of the curriculum. The search for wisdom, however, was still missing.

Because of this basic curriculum structure business schools withstood much of the curriculum turbulence of the 1970s. Student choice was somewhat restricted. Courses related to one another and faculty needed to respect the discipline of their materials because of the progression of knowledge structure. However, the curricula and programs of business schools were not without their critics. Business managers questioned the relevance of the business courses and faculty scholarship. Others questioned the short term thinking that seemed to dominate decision making by the products of these programs. Technology was changing rapidly and business schools were slow to respond. All business school curricula looked the same. There was very little differentiation.

In 1984, the American Assembly of Collegiate Schools of Business commissioned a study of the future of management education and development in the United States. The study by Lyman Porter and Lawrence McKibbin^[3] began a new debate about business education and led to a major revision in the curriculum structures for business schools. The basic conclusions of their study included the position that business schools need to resist the propensity toward homogeneity and accept the risk of being different. The curricula needed more breadth, a greater understanding of the external environment, a greater understanding of international issues,

greater knowledge of an information/service society, more cross-functional integration, and greater attention to the development of people skills.

The Porter/McKibben report was followed shortly by a report by the Commission on Admissions to Graduate Management Education entitled "Leadership for a Changing World: The Future Role of Graduate Management Education"^[4]. This report identified three driving forces that were affecting business schools and the business curriculum: accelerating rates of change and complexity in technology; globalization of markets, communication and human resources; and increasing demographic diversity.

The outcomes of these studies were a further refinement of the business schools accreditation standards. The new standards were designed to give schools greater flexibility in the curriculum, required better mission statements, and asked schools to specifically tie their educational programs to their mission statement. A greater emphasis was placed on outcomes assessment as opposed to the earlier emphasis on resource inputs. However, the basic construct of the curriculum was left unchanged. More liberal arts are recommended but there is little guidance as to why liberal arts are important. How you cover accounting, management, marketing, etc. is more flexible but what the student should hope to accomplish with this knowledge is left mute. Business policy remains as the capstone attempting to integrate the theories of the various subdisciplines.

The new curriculum standards, albeit emphasizing flexibility, mission statements and assessment fail to address the critical question. Is the end point of our quest technical capability or is it some greater good? Is truth an outcome? Is wisdom an outcome? Where are our students challenged to seek a "great society"; challenged to think "greatly of their function"? The recent biography of John J. Rockefeller emphasizes the distinction between his "predatory" business practices and his philanthropy. Is this distinction inevitable or is Whitehead's remark a better quest, a better goal. I believe that if we can organize our curriculum in business to challenge our students to think greatly of their function; if we can challenge them to seek wisdom in their studies; then, not only society, but they will be better off.

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SEEKING MAJESTY IN THE DUST OF THE MOON

by Arline Lowe

"We have art so that we may not perish of the truth."

Nietzsche

As I write this short paper I think it's important to note from the outset that while I have Christian religious roots, I am not a Catholic. This is relevant to these writings because the theme of this paper will explore the fact that the seeking of wisdom, both sacred and profane, can be approached from many different directions, have many angles, layers, and interests and have many surprisingly different outcomes. Just as Susanne K. Langer, writing about the nature of artistic expression in *Form and Feeling* could serve as a vehicle for spiritual interpretation by the philosopher Bernard Lonergan, from which he would come away with interpretations wider and deeper than hers,^[1] so, too, it might be possible for a teacher of art to provide a conduit for spiritual inquiries and understandings, without completely embracing specific dogma relating to these matters. The famous art critic Kenneth Burke said that a work of art does something for the person who makes it and something for the person who views it, but it might not be the same thing. So we see that art can be a powerful universal communicator of many things to many people, especially when it provides room for the viewer to provide his own interpretation or message. I agree with Lonergan that art "... is truer than experience, leaner, more effective, more to the point..." grasping what is truly significant in the world.^[2]

In his article "Faith in the World" in the April/May, 1998, issue of *Civilization*, Vaclav Havel, the president of Czechoslovakia, expresses his hope that a universally held, commonly shared religious sense of world destiny could be formulated from all the major world religions that might save humankind from earthly destruction. Only in this unified way could each man feel accountable, acknowledge his individual role in this collective pursuit.^[3] Yet there are many people in the world who put much effort into the pursuit of justice, social equity, ecologically sound commerce, etc., without any spiritual grounding. They do this because they feel it's the right thing to do, independent of collective spiritual purpose or even individual religious beliefs. What drives them? Do they work for the common good because they think it is the honorable and worthy thing to do, or are other forces at work in which they are simply vehicles from which society draws inspiration?

In a similar vein we find visual artists without any declared spiritual intentionality, sometimes agnostics or atheists, creating works of art which often inspire profound spiritual emotion or feeling in their viewers. Most often the content of the art is a complete remove from any specific religious relationship. As artists they are more often than not totally unaware of their role in this transmission. Indeed when pressed about specific painterly passages and their spiritual references, they would often deny any such intent, yet it seems that for certain audiences they are vessels of spiritual transferral, the artists themselves innocent of any professed purpose in their compositions. As such, they can be perceived by audiences without pre-formed biases about what the artist might mean, without specific messages or content. It occurs to me that they might be more powerful in this way and possibly "connect" with more people because of this.

Interestingly, there are many similarities in the way artists approach their work and the way religious people access inner spiritual feelings. As in the former, in making art, there is the process of a search for some new insight, some kind of discovery or enlightenment; then there is the moving toward a destination that for many is unknown at the outset. There is often a temporary suspension of rational thinking or reality, actually a suprarationality, a "letting go" or a trust in some other force while a transformation or visual solution takes place. The results are artistic resolution or spiritual revelation. In either case something new is there that wasn't before, a heightened consciousness, a reassembling of reflections or insights, a reordering of a virtual or spiritual "space". Rollo May in his book *The Courage To Create* describes the creative process as beginning with the "Encounter," confronting the "problem" at hand, the "Engagement," the act of total absorption in the work and then the "Intensity" with which the work is executed.^[4] In making a spiritual analogy, the Encounter could be the initial or invitational inquiry; the Engagement might be total involvement in the struggle or searching for enlightenment within that inquiry, the Intensity, the depth of one's unwavering belief in his faith. Lonergan, in *Method in Theology* sees joining artistic consciousness to religious sensibility as a way to heighten religious expression. Referring to St. Augustine's *Confessions*, he stated "... art can be the viewing of the world and looking for the something

more that this world reveals, and reveals, so to speak, in silent speech, reveals by a presence that cannot be defined or got hold of."¹⁵

Connecting or linking artists' creative activity with spiritual missions is hardly new. For many 20th century artists, however, working without specific commissions or clerical patronage, making art for themselves, mostly, in a world that according to Vaclav Havel is the most globally atheistic since recorded history,¹⁶ it is interesting to look at their art, understand some of their philosophy, learn about how they work and feel about the process of making art. Of interest here is how these artists created works that while of themselves, in form or content, had no spiritual intentionality, yet they invoked in this viewer very strong spiritual feelings.

With regard to the creative process, a common theme among these painters, like many 20th century artists, seems to be that the artist has no specific "message" at the outset, but poses a challenging or difficult visual problem for himself, a breakthrough which usually arrives as an insight, suddenly and unannounced. Lonergan describes it as a release to the tension of inquiry, a function not of outer circumstances, but of an inner condition which depends upon the artist's inner endowments or gifts or ways of seeing.¹⁷ He then works his way in and out of it, keeping any easy solution at bay. When the process seems easy, or "comfortable", then it's not good. After this initial encounter, a certain momentum develops, often seemingly independent of the artist's critical decision-making, and is moved along intuitively and intensely to a solution that is often quite novel to the artist. Often he might feel as if it were created through him rather than by him. In a 1958 lecture given by Marcel DuChamp in Houston, Texas, he stated "... to all appearances it seems that the artist acts like a mediumistic being who from the labyrinth between time and space, seeks his way to a clearing. If we give the attributes of the medium to an artist we must deny him the state of consciousness on the aesthetic plane about what he is doing and why he is doing it. All his decisions in the artistic execution of his work rest with pure intuition and cannot be translated into a self analysis, spoken or written or even thought out ... In the creative act, the artist goes from intention to realization through a chain of totally subjective reactions. His struggle towards realization is a series of efforts, pains, satisfactions, refusals, decisions which also cannot and must not be fully self-conscious, at least on aesthetic plane..."¹⁸

As Langer describes the process in *Feeling and Form*, the first stage in artistic creation, therefore, is entirely

immanent, the sudden recognition of the total artistic form in imagined experience. From that moment on, the artist's mind is no longer free to wander irresponsibly. It is under the tutelage of "commanding form," the larger artistic directive or concept.¹⁹

The two artists discussed here work or worked figuratively, or representationally of the figure and only one is still living: Chuck Close. Both have approached their work in different ways, with diverse content, styles and sources of inspiration. They have had no declared religious affiliations, and while I could have written about many other artists with similar characteristics, I chose these two because the work they've produced is unusually powerful, courageously approached, the kind of work that leaves the viewer substantially changed, reoriented, altered in some way about the way they think about life or the human condition.

Francis Bacon, an Irish painter who lived in England until his recent death, made large paintings whose subjects all seemed to be in an extremely heightened state of crisis, turmoil or apprehension. They're seen posing in visually twisted positions in architecturally menacing space. When you look at his works, almost any of them, the power and energy that seems to be released from them leaves the viewer shaken or intensely emotionally moved. It's almost as if there had been a chemically charged transferral from the painting to the spectator. He painted many bizarre crucifixions and portraits of popes, the most famous being the one entitled *Study After Velasquez's Pope Innocent X*, but as a non-believer, insisted that his only interest was in copying Velasquez's famous portrait, which for Bacon was one of the most brilliant paintings he had ever seen. He describes his approach to his work as making initial interpretative, expressive marks which then suggest others to build upon. For him, if the forms are made irrationally, they seem to "come on to the nervous system" more strongly. Using large brushes and rags, he wanted the paint to take off on its own, and he described his accidental and chance discoveries as "trapping facts" at their most "living" point which he would then elaborate upon.¹⁰ He sought a disoriented vision, suspending operation of conscious decision-making. While he wanted an ordered image, it had to come about by chance. He describes images materializing with the "... foam of the unconscious locked around it — which is its freshness."¹¹ If his process became effortless, he would immediately interrupt his manner of working and try something more difficult. The paintings had to have an immediacy about them, and when they were done, he had little attachment to them. Although he hoped

some of the better works would be remembered after his death, he had little interest in the future disposition of his works. The expression, the execution, was everything.

In *Triptych* 1972, one of the many triptyches Bacon painted, the left panel shows a figure seated in a chair looking off toward the middle panel, legs crossed, hand resting on his leg. The male figure looks as if he had been wrung out like a wash cloth, then redeposited on the chair in this twisted position. The gestural painting of the figure in this and in the other panels is in stark counterpoint to the smooth, cool-hued, serene surface of the "room" or space around the figure. The middle panel shows two figures wrestling or struggling in the same space. You can almost hear the sound of the silent struggle, sense the "sweat" of it. The right panel shows the solitary figure again looking more directly at viewer, a swirling drape replacing one of his legs. The lighting in these paintings is clinical, overhead, almost like an examination room.

In many of his works there are similar elements: long, loopy irrational shadows attached to the figures, chrome-like spherical shapes like hand rails, umbrella shaped canopies and often a large glass-like transparent cube which encloses the figure. These have no purposeful meaning for him but serve as iconographic scaffolding for compositional unity. Then there's almost always the "signature" gaping or screaming mouth, which he insists interests him only for its glittering colors and forms, not for the horror or violence it suggests. In fact, he said he always wanted to paint a mouth like a Monet sunset, but it never came out that way. Its impact on viewers however, affirms what he felt: that we all see reality through filters or screens and when the artists clears away the veils, we see raw, uncovered, painful truths.^[12]

Chuck Close, a New York artist, just had a major retrospective exhibition of his oversized portraits at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. In contrast with Bacon, his manner of work on his subject at the outset is in a more planned way, but then becomes intuitively governed. First he takes many photographs of his chosen subjects whom he knows, who are familiar to him, with a large format camera. The photographs taken by Close in frontal, closely cropped compositions, show each subject steadily staring straight ahead without expression at the camera — in documentary fashion, almost like passport images. He then enlarges the prints and makes a grid over them and on the large canvas for image reference when working on the final surface. In each quadrant

of the grid he makes highly personal, stylized color interpretations, working square by square — sometimes for many months — to complete one painting. Looked at closely, each square is composed of a dazzling array of colors and forms that are like a microscopic section of the human face seen through a kaleidoscope, composed of seemingly unrelated objects, shapes and colors; yet when you step back, at 20 feet or so, each of these individualized lyrical compositions meld into the unified whole of a stunning portrait. As Close selects the form or color for each subject, he "knows" which color mix to use instinctively — the way a musician "knows" what the music will sound like before it's played, the way a composer, writing musical scores, "hears" the finished symphony. It's a very labor-intensive manner of working — section by section, color by color, tone by tone, "building" a finished portrait. Close's clinical, yet curiously intimate likenesses are a reminder that the emotional impact of a work does not necessarily depend upon the artist infusing his or her own painterly emotions into the works, but may instead result from the unexpected encounter between the subjects and the viewer in which the artist plays the part of a carefully neutral intermediary.^[13]

Close had a severely debilitating medical condition "a deterioration of his spinal cord a few years ago, which left him a quadriplegic. It was assumed he would never paint again, but thanks to his therapists and the devotion of his wife and family, he has become able to paint again, although in an extremely arduous way, and not without the help of many attendants and painting contraptions. Being able to make art brought him back from an emotional abyss of desperation, yet when asked if he sought God or prayer for recovery, he shunned the notion because as he put it, no self-respecting God would respond to an atheist's last minute plea.^[14] Still, though he himself plays no knowing role in it, the works, when finished, have such raw power, reveal such pathos and vulnerability of the human condition, any viewer has to be moved emotionally and spiritually. When viewing his portraits most of which have simple names such as *Robert*, *Linda*, *Mark* or *David* or his many self-portraits, we almost see ourselves looking back, our gazes locked together like ordinary reflections of ourselves. Close scrupulously avoids editorial intervention or the projection of his own personality into his works, hating false or sentimental artistic emotion. By keeping a superficial detachment in his objective painterly reporting of how these ordinary people look, he allows the viewer to acquaint himself with these subjects on his own terms.^[15]

For these artists there was in the making of their art a point at which there was a flow, some other force or energy that dictated which color would go where, how that color would be mixed, how it would be applied, how the parts would be composed, and then an allowance or a kind of granting of a certain life of its own to the work. Langer describes a "strangeness," "otherness," a detachment from reality, a "psychic" distancing.¹¹⁶¹ Many artists besides Bacon have described the kind of "otherness" of shapes which they could not have predicted at the outset. During this withdrawal phase, artistic feelings can be expressed that need not have been experienced directly by the artists. At the end the work appears to become separate from its maker, borne away. This mysterious, irrational sense of separation has no concrete explanation for me, unless the artist was in fact acting as a vehicle — a gifted, artistically informed, totally focussed, emotionally immersed presenter of visual material.

Yet in all, proportion is necessary, for the intellectual "lights" have to be on at the same time for a delicate balance to be maintained. Langer in fact argues against purely intuitive actions, saying that the process of making art is very concrete, for it involves not only levels of perception and experience, but also levels of insight, understanding, contemplation. Art is intellectual, not [only] immediate emotion or immediate experience. The artistic imagination is freely directed by, under the control of, impregnated with, the intellectual character of the artist, the liberation of ready made subject from his ready made world.¹¹⁷ Consequentially, the "otherness" of the artistic is due not only to its aesthetic character or its own life, but also to the fact that it has been "created" by human intelligence and invites human response. Art begins only when a formal factor is recognized as the framework within which the chance attributes of immediate emotion can occur. It is not autobiography; it is editing, grasping what is significant to man.¹¹⁸

In his "Reminiscences" the Russian painter Wassily Kandinsky states, "Painting is a thundering collision between different worlds which are destined, in and from the conflict with one another, to produce the new world that is called a work of art. Each work arises technically just as the cosmos arose — through catastrophes, like the chaotic instrumental roar at the end of a symphony that is called the music of the spheres."¹¹⁹

By temporarily withdrawing from the "real" world, artists working without any avowed spiritual intent, even as agnostics or atheists, might discover in the unplanned or accidental manipulations of forms and content in their completed works, new possibilities of feelings, latent passions revealed to them, fuller and richer than their own "waking" temperament could ever have imagined. So, too, the viewer can share in these discoveries, independent of their prior predispositions, if they are enlightened about art and artists and are open to the kind of seeing that is required. Art enables us to look for more than this world reveals, can reveal an ulterior "presence". It has an intellectual component similar to language, involving a special kind of listening and mental shift that allows the viewer to hear the message distinct from the background sounds, struggling through "like a living thing."¹²⁰

As a person who teaches art and makes art, I'm drawn to the kinds of inquiries the seminar *Knowledge and Wisdom* promised to explore. I'm hungry for something I don't have, but I don't know how to identify it. I've also had some personal experiences involving my own artistic works in which the expression indeed seemed to come from someplace else, fueled by some outer force, generating a work of art that seemed independent of my participation. My strongest paintings look like someone else did them. Perhaps these feelings are linked.

Art is an exploration of potentialities for human living. Thinking about art helps us think too about exploring the full freedom of our ways of feeling and perceiving.¹²¹ Teaching about art and artists is a universal way to reach the minds of a diversified student body. I'm interested in exposing my students to the kind of art that would open an inquiry about the way they look at the world and see their role within it. While often undeserved or even unasked for, artists play a very significant role in shaping how we view our world, by inviting us to look deeper, wider, in examining life's meanings. By studying these artists who make art that is not "comfortable," but is engaging, unsettling, and yes! controversial, the students will hopefully learn to "see" or examine things in a more meaningful way. This might enrich the way they live their lives and participate in the world. I want to be part of this.

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WISDOM AND THE TEACHING PROFESSION

by Albert B. Hakim

The general topic of the faculty seminar on *Wisdom and Knowledge* provided an invitation to consider what kind of knowledge deserves the privileged name of wisdom and how, in turn, this is brought to bear on the teaching profession, especially at a Catholic university. To respond to this invitation, what I'm presenting here is but one direction in which the philosophical-theological meaning of *wisdom* can be developed and how this fits in with our role as university professors. We await, as I came to realize in preparing this paper, the advent of that interested scholar who, with several sabbaticals under his belt, is ready to make a lasting contribution to the theology of the Word!

I think we'd all agree that raw, factual data are not, in themselves, the stuff of wisdom. When a professor turns to his class from looking out the window and announces, "It's raining outside," his students wouldn't rise to proclaim "how wise our professor is!" *The World Almanac* warehouses an immense amount of information; it's there when we want it or need it, but it's hardly a guidance manual. Nevertheless there is an importance attached to factual data, on one account because they are indispensable ingredients of daily life, and on a second because they offer the first glimpse of the meaning of wisdom. Shoppers, for example, have to know the prices of things, yet it's a mark of wisdom, call it practical, if they can balance needs and costs to fit their family budget. The doctor has got to know the drugs and compounds he deals with for, as a matter of practical wisdom, he must use them to restore his patient's health. Or that Nova Scotia fisherman, the wisest person on earth, who is in the habit of seeing the universe in the small things of life because he sees in his daily catch of fish the ocean beyond.

Idiot savants, we are told, can perform prodigious feats of memory or solve labyrinthine mathematical puzzles with unbelievable speed, but they are quite incapable of understanding or conceptualizing what they do. They cannot articulate, for example, the unifying theme of the myriad facts they handle, yet in the very notion of unifying theme lies the fundamental requisite of what we are wont to call 'wisdom'. If facts resist attachment to each other, without any thread of unity running among them, they remain isolated bits of information and are as unhappy as the atoms of Democritus. But on closer look, every fact, every individual thing, begs to

be understood — that is, to be understood in terms of how it is related to other things; relationship founds meaning. It's up to us to see the relationship, for whatever is not seen in context is not seen at all. We know a chair when we see how it is related to human shape. A slate on the classroom wall is a chalkboard, overhead it's a ceiling, underfoot it's a pavement. We refer a person, beset by confusion, to a counselor who helps him see, for the first time, a relationship among the ideas floating around in his head at random and, with this new understanding, to remove the confusion they were causing.

Relatedness is what the ancient Greek philosophers had in mind when elaborating the theme of 'the one and the many': the one is seen as one only in reference to the many, and the many is seen as many only in reference to the one. The entire history of philosophy can be written under the rubric of the one and the many. Indeed, the trick of all understanding is to maintain the equilibrium between the one and the many regardless of the area of knowledge, be it philosophy, science, psychology, religion, economics, art, medicine, music, parenting. I recall a dramatic enactment of this truth in a ballet by the Belgian choreographer Maurice Bejart entitled "Tetraktys," a Greek word signifying the sacred number of 10, which opened to 10 dancers dancing together at one side of the stage and then one by one, each of the them detached from the ensemble to dance alone at the other side and then return to the ensemble. The implication was clear, the one and the many were mutually self-defining without destroying either.

A mental experiment, such as Einstein would have enjoyed, is to imagine yourself all alone, in a universe where there is nothing but you, unrelated therefore to anything else. Isn't it true that your very unrelatedness makes it impossible for you to know yourself? But now furnish the vast emptiness, first with inanimate things, then animate. With each successive addition, you begin to understand the similarities and differences in virtue of which you come to know what and who you are; and the meaning of what and who you are deepens and enlarges as relationships themselves deepen and enlarge. The meaning of you is forged at the intersection of those relationships.

So the search for relationship is the essence of the search for wisdom, etymologically enshrined in the word 'philosophy,' *the love of wisdom*. It is the drive of the mind

for meaning, how things stand one to another, how they are related one to another. In this sense, the "know thyself" of Socrates is not an invitation to self-enclosure, for it has an outward-looking component as well; one cannot know how he stands to himself unless he at the same time knows how he stands to others; he cannot know his own self unless he knows other selves; knowing self and knowing other are two moments of the same act. What is this justice you are seeking inward for but first and foremost how you relate outward to another who is also seeking it? What is prudence but the balanced measuring of your action vis-a-vis another? How one relates to others in the matter of ethical behavior, consecrated in the term *ethical wisdom*, is the mainstay of Socrates' thought, and the one on which all other aspects of his philosophy depend; it is the recognition of the fundamental importance of the ethical in human life and of doing good as the basic principle of human activity. When Socrates praises striving for virtue, seeking the truth, reaching out for the good, he is praising wisdom, whence he avers that virtue is wisdom. There is, for him, a dynamic aspect to virtue in that what ought to be done requires its being done — by its very nature it is meant to flow unimpeded into behavior. The person who knows what is to be done and does it, for whom there is a continuum between knowing and doing, between the mind and the hand, between contemplation and action, is the person who is wise. At its central point, there is no wisdom without virtue. "It is wisdom," says Socrates, "that makes possible courage and self-control and integrity or, in a word, true goodness."

This inward-outward complementarity can be seen in a still higher context, one that is again a rich part of the Greek legacy. Heraclitus spoke — in reality he never 'explained' but, imitating the prophetic ambiguity of the Delphic oracle, he only 'spoke' — of the Logos, a doctrine that suffuses his teaching. Given the incessant activity of the world about us, a vortex of constant motion, it is also given that there is a unity prevailing throughout, whence the term 'cosmos.' Since this unity cannot be self-imparted, it can only be imparted from above, namely, by the power, the force, or the being called Logos. Though his first concern was for the universe of physical action, he is more profoundly thinking of the universe of personal action, for he bids us "hear" the Logos so that every action of ours is in tune with ordered reality. The term 'logos' itself has various meanings in Greek philosophy like knowledge, study, law, word and wisdom, but they all pertain to its over-arching goal of unifying what is. In hearing the 'word', or better the Word, we are com-

pelled to follow its dictates, urged in a sense to *do* it. This is the ultimate grounding for our knowledge of what is right, for moral action is now understood as our response to the Word, as our being answerable to It. Further, without attempting to say precisely how he means it, Heraclitus implies that response to the Word is somehow brought to its fullness in being united, or re-united, with It, for when a person dies, he "achieves" death, and finally returns to the Logos.

The pre-eminent place given to the Word is not unique with the Greeks and perhaps is found in all world religions as a testimony to mankind's reaction to a fundamental truth of reality. It is certainly so in the Jewish tradition, beginning very early with the ancient Hebrews for whom the Word of God, the Dabhar Yahweh, was taken to mean that God was revealing Himself, not just giving information about Himself, but in the astounding sense of making Himself *known* by giving Himself. To hear the Word of God was a humbling experience, awesome for the believer: hearing the Word of God in this life was the closest one could come to being with Him. How could the pious Hebrew not be moved by the lyricism of Isaiah:

*For as the rain and the snow
come down from heaven,
and return not thither but water the earth,
making it bring forth and sprout,
giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater,
so shall my word be that goes forth
from my mouth;
it shall not return to me empty,
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,
and prosper in the thing which I sent it.*

In the Christian tradition too, building upon the Hebrew, the Word has an exalted status. It personifies God as it does in the Jewish tradition but the exemplar in which it does so is God as Triune, the Trinity, and precisely in the Second Person of the Trinity, as declared in the majestic phrases opening St. John's Gospel, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." The implications of this declaration are enormous. It makes it possible for us to assert that the word of God the Father, inasmuch as it is spoken from the depth of His being and self-knowledge, is expressed with infinite perfection in the Word; the Word is the 'going forth' of the Father in the Son. The Father, as it were, projects Himself in His Word, His Son. We can also assert that the whole of creation, inasmuch as John immediately adds "all things were made through him," comes forth from God through the Word and participates

in the unity of the Father with the Son. If 'word' is taken in its broader meaning as 'communicative action,' every action a person 'does' becomes a self-communication. When God then 'does' creation, creation itself is His Word and reaches its perfection in the Word Incarnate. Nor can it be otherwise than that whatever proceeds from God must needs be loved by Him for, as John avers in his first epistle, "God is love." Now for a trinitarian theologian like St. Augustine, insofar as the Third Person of the Trinity 'completes' the inner life of God as Love personified, works of completion are attributed to the Holy Spirit, and creation is seen as completed by the all-in-gathering love of God.

The highest instance of Wisdom includes its lower instances, just as the highest instance of Being includes its lower instances. The relationship between these levels was given classical expression by Plato in the myth of creation in the *Timaeus*. God the Creator looks to the supernal world of forms and replicates the perfections beheld there in the world below. The limited, circumscribed perfections of this world, however imperfectly held, are reflections of the highest, images of the eternal, sharers in the ultimate perfection, shown, for example, in Plato's finely wrought description of time as "the moving image of eternity." The Platonic doctrine of participation became a favorite with the early Christian thinkers because it supplied them with a philosophical means of conveying their belief that all created things share God's perfection and that man especially, as a knowing and willing and loving creation, can be redefined according to the biblical vision as the "image of God." It's the same with wisdom. Human wisdom is the analogue of Divine Wisdom and the human word the analogue of the Divine Word. We felt that the shopper, the doctor and the fisherman ought to be called wise and, as instances of wisdom we meet everyday, they share the Supreme Wisdom albeit in a human way; they exemplify how inward-knowing is completed by outward-saying — the word on its mission. That mission is a reaching out for understanding, for unity, for togetherness and is in itself another exemplification of the fact that every individual thing in reality is one-with-the-whole. One kind of relatedness reaches out for another, fits in with what is higher and, in a sense, bit by bit, grade by grade, all levels are unified as concentric spheres of reality interweaving, interacting and interliving with each other from the lowest to the highest.

It is in such a theology of the word that the professor's role is to be understood, for the word is the professor's vocation. The word goes forth from him to his students as an extension of his teaching-person and is therefore shaped by an expertise in his discipline, a proficiency in his ability to communicate, and a reputation for competence among his peers. His agenda, whatever his discipline might be, is to synthesize data into larger wholes, to discover ways in which the disparate can be integrated, to reflect on experiences for their deepest meaning. The professor's word is also shaped by considering what aspects of his discipline directly touch on human well-being, for it is not enough, as St. Thomas Aquinas puts it, to live, but to live humanly. A professor of economics, for example, having uncanny insights into the ebb and flow of money for designing awesome profits, would be woefully lacking in a sense of human economy, if he held that money had only one end, to be made, and not another, to be shared.

Though the professor is but one person, he is an incredible combination of many roles, a composite of concentric spheres, a talking onion. He is a purveyor of knowledge, a researcher, a counselor, an advisor, an authority figure, a human being. In each one of these roles the professor is entrusted with the imperatives of wisdom, the imparting of the word that would generate, for himself as well as his students, an understanding of the world, a respect for its sacred character, and an abiding desire to plumb its human dimensions. And true to the living traditions of wisdom of which he is a part, he develops in his students an appreciation of the many levels of reality spoken of above which, though distinct from each other, are harmonized into a meaningful whole by the culture of love in a personal universe, the ultimate wisdom.

If there is any misgiving that we are not doing things just right, that our presentations sometimes fail, that our ambition is not tempered with common sense, perhaps we can take some encouragement from the disarming way in which G.K. Chesterton praises the woman who, as mother, instinctively resonates to the uncomplicated nature of the child's world and understands that "to pour that fiery simplicity on the whole of life is the only real aim of education" and that, as fumbling as we human beings are in our efforts, "if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly."

CAN WE TALK?

by John J. Ranieri

In many science fiction movies, there is often a scene in which one of the characters — usually a scientist or a professor — tries to prevent the destruction of humanity by reasoning with the marauding beast or the alien invaders. We all know the result of this intervention. Whether by lethal laser ray or a giant reptilian foot, the reasonable innocent is summarily dispatched, leaving the world to be saved by more pragmatic heroes equipped with the latest in military technology.

Usually the point of such episodes is to demonstrate the practical superiority of the decisive, no-nonsense hero or heroine over the ineffectual egghead, but they can also prompt questions concerning the limits of rational discussion. For these films make it clear that there is simply no reasoning with a monster (a subtext of many of these Cold War sci-fi movies seems to be that neither can we use reason in dealing with the ideological "monsters" that oppose the American way of life).

Whatever the propagandistic intent of such films, questions concerning the efficacy of reason in public life are worthy of serious consideration. How *do* we talk with those to whom an appeal to reason is futile or whose horizon is so radically different as to make discussion difficult, if not impossible? Anyone with even a cursory knowledge of the 20th century would find it difficult to deny that the destructiveness and violence of some of its political and social movements has been due in significant degree to the fact that both leaders and followers showed themselves to be impervious to reason. Nor is the problem limited to totalitarian and fascist regimes. The mutual incomprehension that too often characterizes the agendas of groups vying for influence within liberal democracies vitiates any attempt to act with regard to a common good. From the tone of a recent *New York Times* editorial decrying the use of school vouchers to enable children to attend private or parochial schools, and from many of the supportive letters equating religion with indoctrination, one would think that the very foundations of democracy were being undermined. Certainly this is an issue to be debated; my point is that the virulence of the reaction seems disproportionate to the actual policy change being proposed, and that the reaction exposes the seemingly unbridgeable worldviews between those directly affected by the policy and the newspaper's editorial staff. And even though one probably stands a better chance of having a rational exchange

with the editorial board of the *Times* than with Godzilla, the depth of the differences in outlook can make one wonder if reasonable discourse is possible. When one adds to this scenario the fact that some postmodern reactions to Enlightenment rationalism have cast doubt on the ability of reason to communicate across cultures, it is understandable why some have simply despaired of even trying.

Despite difficulties such as these, I would not count myself among the despairing. In fact, as a participant in a recent faculty summer seminar entitled, *Knowledge and Wisdom*, I came away from the experience impressed by the willingness of colleagues from across the disciplines to engage one another on questions of foundational importance with honesty and at a level of depth for which there are few opportunities during the academic year (or, for that matter, at any time). We spoke seriously of that "wisdom" that is both the goal and the source of truth, yet at the same time beyond the pursuit of truth or the efforts of thought. This is the wisdom that orders all knowledge and grounds the disciplines. In the great religions and in the ancient and medieval philosophical traditions one ordered one's soul and ideally, one's community and society in light of such wisdom. The seminar was a marvelous opportunity to talk with one another about the most important things having to do not only with what it means to be a teacher and/or a scholar, but also with what it means to be an authentic person.

At the same time I could not help thinking about those of my friends and colleagues on campus who would find the whole idea of "wisdom" vague, nebulous or preposterous. With others it might prompt reactions of suspicion or outright hostility, to the extent that talk of "wisdom" is associated with historical metanarratives that have been used to oppress, exclude and persecute. And then there are those who are just too busy to spend time considering wisdom; raising the question of whether it is their busyness that feeds their unwillingness or vice versa. Questions like these and an article by Jesuit theologian David Hollenbach read during the seminar have led to the following reflections.

Hollenbach has given much thought to these questions. He has written extensively on the common good, the role of religion in public life, and the possibilities of rational discourse in a pluralistic society.¹¹ In his essay "Is Tolerance Enough? The Catholic University and the

Common Good," he criticizes the way in which political philosopher John Rawls approaches the condition of diversity in Western political culture. Confronted with a pluralism of values and widely differing conceptions of the human good within a single society, Rawls appeals to the virtue of tolerance, or, more specifically, to what he calls "the method of avoidance." What this means is that in our political life "we try, so far as we can, neither to assert nor deny any religious, philosophical or moral views, or their associated philosophical accounts of truth and the status of values."¹²¹ At the same time, there exists an "overlapping consensus" to the extent that the views held by people of various traditions coincide with the values of freedom and equality recognized by Rawls as necessary to achieve political justice.¹²² The final arbiter in matters of public morality, however, is "public reason," understood as "the shared methods of, and public knowledge available, to common sense, and the procedures and conclusions of science when these are not controversial."¹²³

With regard to the "method of avoidance," Hollenbach maintains that tolerance, considered as the primary virtue of public life, eventually undermines the very community it is meant to protect. Such tolerance can be easily assimilated to indifference, leading to alienation among the members of a society. In Hollenbach's words:

A principled commitment to avoiding sustained discourse about the common good can produce a downward spiral in which shared meaning, understanding, and community become even harder to achieve in practice. Or, more ominously, when the pluralism of diverse groups veers toward a state of group conflict with racial or class or religious dimensions, pure tolerance can become a strategy like that of an ostrich with its head in the sand.¹²⁴

Similarly, Hollenbach finds the criteria that constitute Rawls's "public reason" to be "a very thin reed on which to rest the civic unity of the nation."¹²⁵ He fears that reliance on common sense is precarious, insofar as common sense in the United States seems increasingly to reflect the values of the market in ways that are detrimental to human solidarity and cooperation. Hollenbach also detects circularity in this kind of argument, leading him to the following conclusion:

In my view, it will not do to say that there is a moral obligation to support just liberal institu-

tions and that such support always requires that the reasons used in political argument be those that everyone in a pluralistic society already finds defensible if not compelling. Such a conclusion begs the question, for it assumes that the reasons that are contained in the "common sense" prevailing in a society at a particular historical moment are in fact a sufficient basis upon which to construct just institutions and policies.¹²⁶

In place of the "method of avoidance" and "public reason" offered by Rawls, Hollenbach proposes "intellectual solidarity." This means "a willingness to take other persons seriously enough to engage them in conversation and debate about what makes life worth living, including what will make for the good of our deeply interdependent public life."¹²⁷ While including the respect and appreciation for diversity characteristic of tolerance, intellectual solidarity does not remain at a level of non-interference, but seeks "positive engagement with the other through both listening and speaking." In contrast to a "method of avoidance" intellectual solidarity encourages discussion about various conceptions of the good life. As such it involves "conversation and argument about the shape of the culture the participants either share through their common traditions or could share in the future through the understanding of each other they seek to achieve." Where such engagement takes place, there a genuine community of freedom begins to exist.¹²⁸

Hollenbach locates the primary arena for this type of exchange within the realms of civil society and culture, rather than the "legislative chamber or the court of law." Specifically, he identifies universities, religious communities, the world of the arts, and the sphere of serious journalism as places where this dialogue can flourish, although "it occurs as well wherever people bring their received historical traditions on the meaning of the good life into intelligent and critical encounter with understandings of this good held by other peoples with other traditions."¹²⁹ His hope is that encounters of this kind will bear fruit in the political and economic realm, and he cites the abolition of slavery, the civil rights movement, and increasing efforts to secure better health care for all as instances in which challenges to the reigning common sense emerged out of the communities and voluntary associations of civil society to bring about change in the areas of politics and law.¹³⁰

While I am largely in agreement with his criticism of Rawls and sympathetic to the idea of "intellectual solidarity," I still find myself somewhat dissatisfied with

Hollenbach's account. There are two basic reasons for my reservations. First, I do not think that Hollenbach has given sufficient attention to the fact that within a pluralistic society there will be people who not only have no desire for reasoned dialogue but who are positively against it. Intellectual solidarity would seem to presuppose a willingness to take part in public conversation, but Hollenbach says nothing about those who may not be so inclined. As presented by Hollenbach, intellectual solidarity seems to assume a readiness for discussion among the members of society, waiting to be tapped by those who signal their openness and desire to move beyond mere tolerance. This view strikes me as a bit sanguine. The second reason for my reservations develops this point. Here I have in mind a situation in which there is a willingness to engage in discussion between diverse individuals or groups, but where the constitutive horizons of the parties involved are not simply different from each other, but incommensurable.¹¹² My concern is whether Hollenbach's prescription for dialogue penetrates deeply enough to reach a level where bearers of incommensurable worldviews can communicate on a more than superficial plane.

In my questions for Hollenbach, I have been influenced by Eric Voegelin, a 20th century philosopher (1901-1985) whose reflection on these issues has been largely ignored in current debates. German by birth, Voegelin's early writings on racial theory were sufficiently irritating to the National Socialist regime that he was forced to flee Europe in 1934. Thus, he knew from first hand experience the impossibility of conducting a rational discussion with ideologues. This led to a lifelong effort to address the social and political crisis of his time, the loss of rationality in public discourse, and the therapeutic means necessary to restore it. While it is well beyond the scope of this essay to give an overview of Voegelin's philosophy or to compare his work to that of Hollenbach, it should at least be possible to show how his thought bears upon the issues we have been considering, especially those having to do with Hollenbach's notion of "intellectual solidarity."

Voegelin had a good deal to say about the conditions that make rational discussion possible. In an essay written in honor of the 100th anniversary of the publication of Mill's *On Liberty*, Voegelin noted that, Mill focused on the freedom to discuss (thoroughly convinced, as Mill was, that rational discussion was a crucial element in humanity's inevitable progress from ignorance to enlightenment). From the disillusioned perspective of the late 20th century, Voegelin suggests that the more important

question might be whether there exists a readiness to discuss.¹¹³

Drawing upon the Platonic dialogues, Voegelin notes how Socrates argues that a person can be said to live well only when his/her soul takes its bearing from *episteme*, the highest sort of wisdom or knowledge. This knowledge is contrasted with a condition of *amathia*, a foolishness or ignorance with regard to this ordering wisdom. Those who dwell in *amathia* have allowed themselves to become incapable of rational discussion. Voegelin finds a similar distinction within the biblical tradition, where the person guided by reverent "fear of the Lord" is opposed to the fool (*nabal*) who revolts against God.¹¹⁴

On the basis of these distinctions, Voegelin makes an assertion that "may well appear ridiculous to many of our contemporaries: Rational discussion on order in the existence of humanity and society is possible only when accompanied by knowledge of transcendental fulfillment. When this knowledge is lacking, discussion will be dominated by *amathia*. And the symptom of *amathia* is a lack of readiness to discuss, the fundamental reason for which is the unwillingness of the participants to be drawn into the realms of the transcendental." This is not to say that rational discussion is not possible; it is simply to recognize that this kind of conversation is possible "only between men capable of using their powers of reason; a fool, as here defined in the technical sense, has lost this ability."¹¹⁵

Voegelin did not hesitate to draw out the conclusions implied by this evaluation: "the true dividing line in the contemporary crisis does not run between liberals and totalitarians, but between the religious and philosophical transcendentalists on the one side, and the liberal and totalitarian immanentist sectarians on the other side."¹¹⁶ With this statement, Voegelin brings a critical issue to the fore, and also reveals where he would most likely part company with David Hollenbach. If openness to wisdom is a precondition for rational discussion, then one cannot engage in a genuine discussion with those who are lacking in this openness.¹¹⁷ Hollenbach tends to draw his distinction differently, between those committed to tolerance alone and those willing to move toward intellectual solidarity. In principle, there is no reason why people of any political stripe, whether liberal or communist, could not take part in a dialogue animated by intellectual solidarity. Voegelin would not agree. Rational discussion with liberals¹¹⁸ or totalitarians is not possible, because neither liberalism nor totalitarianism is a wisdom tradition at all. While it might be possible to "exchange views" with adherents of these political

philosophies/movements, a true dialogue would be impossible. Where there does not exist a willingness to seriously consider the relevance of "wisdom" for public life, there exists no "community of language" within which to engage in conversation. Consequently, such people can be dealt with only as "objects of investigation" and not as "partners in a discussion."¹¹⁹ To some, Voegelin's language may sound unduly harsh and pessimistic. Perhaps, though, he is merely being uncomfortably candid; pointing out that the most fruitful possibilities for dialogue in society may exist between those whose lives are informed by or at least open to "wisdom". In fact, a significant part of his philosophical project was to work out a language that would make such a dialogue possible.

This last observation is important, because despite his sometimes severe criticisms concerning the possibility for rational discussion in contemporary society, Voegelin's work is primarily constructive. Like Hollenbach, Voegelin would agree that the pluralism and tolerance in which liberal democracy takes such pride could easily mask an indifference to genuine engagement. I think, though, that Voegelin would find "intellectual solidarity" an imprecise and insubstantial substitute for tolerance. From his perspective, the type of dialogue brought about through "intellectual solidarity" is relatively easy to arrange, to the extent that this involves bringing people together in a public forum in order to talk. Voegelin's concern is that such encounters, however serious, are often little more than opportunities for people of incommensurable horizons to state their respective orthodoxies, congratulate themselves on their open-mindedness, and go home.

For Voegelin, "The possibility of effective dialogue depends on the existence of a common medium of experience and of language in which to talk."¹²⁰ The key term here is "experience." At the source of the meanings that constitute the self-interpretation of persons and societies are the experiences of participation in a reality greater than ourselves: "Man, when he experiences himself as existent, discovers his specific humanity as that of the questioner for the where-from and the where-to, for the ground and the sense of his existence."¹²¹ "Reason," in Voegelinian terms, is this openness of human beings to the ground of their existence as they experience them-

selves as wondering, seeking, and being drawn by mystery. As such, reason is inseparable from that "wisdom" that is its origin and to which it responds.

Voegelin's emphasis on experience is an attempt to discover a common ground for rational discussion that would not be bound to the definition of reason as formulated within any particular cultural, religious or philosophical tradition, while at the same time remaining recognizably equivalent to the experience of openness as expressed in each tradition through its myths, symbols, narratives, rituals, legal codes, etc.¹²² He does not claim to offer a neutral, universal perspective that transcends all cultures while itself belonging to none; and he is particularly critical of liberalism's tendency to understand its own principles as universally applicable, when in fact they are as culture bound and particular as those of any other society.¹²³ Voegelin offers an approach that is sensitive to the historical emergence of reason as it manifests itself in every culture, while at the same time acknowledging the constancy, throughout history, of the openness that constitutes the core of rationality. Typical of his broad understanding of reason, Voegelin discovers its manifestation in such diverse phenomena as Siberian shamanism, Coptic papyri, the petroglyphs of the Ile-de-France, and the symbolism of African tribes.¹²⁴

While this brief sketch hardly does justice to the richness and nuance of Voegelin's thought, I hope that I have been able to convey at least some sense of the direction that a Voegelinian approach would take to the questions we have been considering about the possibility of public discourse. With respect to Hollenbach's work, I would understand Voegelin's philosophy to be complementary, not opposed. Both men are fervently committed to the renewal of rational discussion in contemporary society and both are aware of the inadequacies of tolerance in grounding public order. Hollenbach, while critical of contemporary liberal thinkers, seeks to engage them in argument and appropriate [discussion about] what is salutary in their thought. Voegelin, for his part, would likely maintain that such an exchange is ultimately futile unless the partners in the dialogue allow themselves "to be drawn into the realms of the transcendental." For he would insist that an essential condition for any such discussion is a reverence for wisdom.

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10. *ibid.*, 14.
11. Hollenbach, "Virtue, the Common Good and Democracy," 153.
12. I have borrowed this distinction from Charles Taylor, who describes practices as "different" when they are simply variations on common, already accepted, existing practices. Practices are "incommensurable" when they are "incompatible in principle." For Taylor, liberal democracy is better at handling "difference" than "incommensurability." "For incommensurable activities are rivals; their constitutive rules prescribe in contradiction to each other. Only where two activities are simply different is there no question of judging one to be an inferior version of the other... That is what is tempting to the anti-imperialist liberal conscience, wary of ethnocentrism... It takes the heat off; we no longer have to judge whose way of life is superior." In Charles Taylor, "Rationality," in *Philosophy and the Human Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 144-46.
13. Eric Voegelin, "On Readiness to Rational Discussion," in *Freedom and Serfdom*, ed. Albert Hunold (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1961), 269-84.
14. *ibid.*, 275-83.
15. *ibid.*, 278, 283.
16. Eric Voegelin, "The Origins of Totalitarianism," *The Review of Politics* 15 (1953), 75.
17. It would be a misunderstanding of Voegelin to think that he means that one has to be a religious believer in order to engage in rational discussion. In Voegelinian terms one does not have to "believe in God" in order to engage in rational discussion. However, Voegelin would insist that questions concerning the ultimate meaning and intelligibility of reality arise spontaneously in us, and that to refuse to entertain them is to choose an intellectual and spiritual obscurantism that closes us to genuinely rational discussion.
18. I do not mean "liberal" in the partisan sense that it has in current American political discourse. Liberalism, as traditionally understood, refers to "a perspective in political philosophy... which abstracts the person from community, sets individual freedom and rights at odds with the community, and correspondingly stresses contractual theories of society." This description is taken from Michael J. Himes and Kenneth R. Himes, O.F.M., *Fullness of Faith* (Paulist Press: NY, 1993, p. 29).
19. Eric Voegelin, *Autobiographical Reflections*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 93.
20. Eric Voegelin, *Conversations With Eric Voegelin*, ed. R. Eric O'Connor (Montreal: Thomas More Institute, 1980), 37.
21. Eric Voegelin, "Reason: The Classic Experience," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, Vol. 12, *Published Essays 1966-1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 268. In Voegelin's view "experience" is inseparable from the reality in which we participate and the consciousness by which we participate in that reality. Experience is located in neither subject nor object, but in the immediacy embracing both.
22. "So if there is no common basis of intellect, how do we talk? The only thing one can do now is to go back of the rational formulations of classic and medieval philosophy, abandon also (for the dialogic purpose) the Old and New Testaments because these are not sources of common belief, and go back of the formulated positions to the experiences which engender symbols." Voegelin, *Conversations With Eric Voegelin*, 40.
23. Eric Voegelin, "The Oxford Political Philosophers," *Philosophical Quarterly* 3 (April 1953), 97-114 and "Liberalism and Its History," *The Review of Politics* 36 (1974), 504-20.
24. Eric Voegelin, "On Classical Studies," in *The Collected Works of Eric Voegelin*, Vol. 12, *Published Essays 1966-1985*, ed. Ellis Sandoz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1990), 262.

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